

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ
عَلَّمَ الْإِنْسَانَ مَا لَمْ يَعْلَمْ
TAUGHT MAN THAT WHICH HE KNEW NOT

PAKISTAN-INDIA WARS 1965 & 1971



**NATIONAL DEFENCE UNIVERSITY
ISLAMABAD**



National Defence University
Islamabad
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**Pakistan – India Wars
1965 & 1971**

PART-I
PAKISTAN- INDIA WAR 1965

PART-II
PAKISTAN- INDIA WAR 1971

NDU Military History Publications Series: Number 1

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Pakistan–India Wars 1965 & 1971

**Military History Presentations Conducted by
National Security & War Course 2010-2011**

**Compiled & edited by
Colonel Khush Muhammad Khan
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**National and Military History Cell, ISSRA
National Defence University, Islamabad**

2012

The weak and defenceless, in this imperfect world, invite aggression from others. The best way in which we can serve the cause of peace is by removing the temptation from the path of those who think that we are weak and, therefore, they can bully or attack us. That temptation can only be removed if we make ourselves so strong that nobody dare entertain any aggressive designs against us.

**Quaid-i-Azam's Address
On the Occasion of Establishment of
H.M.P.S. Dilawar
23 January 1948**

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FOREWORD

History is a voyage through the accumulative experience and wisdom of human beings. It is one of the oldest academic disciplines that formed part of even the Platonic and Aristotelian curriculum. History, particularly the military history, has a lot to offer to an inquisitive, discerning and knowledge yearning mind. It is always wise to look back, walk along the trails of history and learn from the collective wisdom of humanity. It is in this backdrop that a centre of excellence, 'National and Military History Cell' was established at National Defence University. The Cell has been mandated, inter alia routine academic activities, to organize research on national and military subject. I am sure, the National and Military History Cell will be able to come up with better publications, encompassing genuine research and the latest trends in military subject, in the years to come.

We are now embarking upon a project of compiling, scrutinizing and publishing our participants' research work namely IRPs, GRPs, MHPs and other assignments duly categorized as per security classifications. ISSRA has come up with a renewed zeal and commitment to increase its capability to arrange seminars/workshops as well as the publication of consolidated research papers. I would like to commend ISSRA, particularly the compilers/editors of this book, Colonel Khush Muhammad Khan, Deputy Director Libraries, and Lieutenant Colonel Manzoor Ahmed Abbasi, Officer-in-Charge National and Military History Cell for completing this project expeditiously.

Lieutenant General
President National Defence University
Agha Muhammad Umer Farooq

PREFACE

The book 'Pakistan-India Wars 1965 & 1971' consists of military history presentations (MHPs), delivered by the participants of National Security and War Course 2010/2011. A detailed scrutiny of all MHPs available at NDU transpires that most of them are incremental in nature and, at times, replications. Therefore, the latest ones are better to be published. This aspect was also given due consideration whether the panelists, who delivered these presentations, should be requested to convert them into research papers or should we publish these MHPs in original form. Owing to the constraints of time and accessibility to the originators, the latter was thought to be the right course. But this option inhibits the circulation of the book beyond military circles, as mentioned at the verso of the title page. The existing material on military history is being published, with necessary editing and minimal modifications, so that it should not remain lying in the shelves. It ought to be shared with military officers, particularly young ones. National and Military History Cell will, however, make concerted efforts in the days to come to publish MHPs as well as IRPs on military history in the shape of proper books, based on well researched papers, for a wider readership.

The book in hand comprises two parts; Part one consists of presentation on 1965 War and Part two on 1971 War. Since this book is a maiden issue and comprises military history presentations, written in typical military format and diction, a smooth flow of language can not be expected. The readers are, therefore, welcome to suggest any improvement in the next editions. The editors take this opportunity to request the readers, who have flavour for the subject of military history, to share their writings with the National & Military History Cell, NDU, which can be considered for publication in the subsequent editions.

Compilers & Editors

LIST OF ABBRIVATIONS

AAA	Anti Aircraft Artillery
AD	Air Defence
ADGE	Air Defence Ground Environment
AHQ	Air Headquarters
AKRF	Azad Kashmir Regimental Force
APC	All Parties Conference
BRBL	Bamba Wali Ravi Badiyan Link Canal
C3I	Command, Control, Communication and Intelligence
C4I	Command, Control, Communication, Computer and Intelligence
CAP	Combat Air Patrol
CAS	Chief of Air Staff
CENTO	Central Treaty Organization
C-in-C	Commander-in-Chief
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CS	Close Support
DCA	Defensive Counter Attack
DIG	Deputy Inspector General
FOBs	Forward Observation Bases
GHQ	General Headquarters
GOC	General Officer Commanding
GOI	Government of India
GRP	Group Research Paper
GT Road	Grand Trunk Road
HL Radars	High Level Radars
IAF	Indian Air Force
IFF	Identification, Friend or Foe
IHK	Indian Held Kashmir
IN	Indian Navy
IR Missile	Infrared Missile
IRP	Individual Research Paper
ISSRA	Institute for Strategic Studies, Research and Analysis
J&K	Jammu and Kashmir
JOC	Joint Operation Centre
JSHQ	Joint Staff Headquarters
MHP	Military History Presentation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
NDU	National Defence University
NHQ	Naval Headquarters

NI(M)	Nishan-e-Imtiaz Military
OAS	Offensive Air Support
OCA	Offensive Counter Air
OCAO	Offensive Counter Air Operation
PAF	Pakistan Air Force
PN	Pakistan Navy
PNS	Pakistan Naval Ships
POL	Petrol, Oil and Lubricants
RCC	Ravi Chenab Corridor
RCD	Regional Cooperation for Development
SAM	Surface to Air Missile
SEATO	Southeast Asian Treaty Organization
SLOCS	Sea Lines of Communications
SSG	Special Services Group
TOT	Time on Target, Time over Target
UBDC	Upper Bari Doab Canal
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
USA	United States of America
USSR	Union of Socialist Soviet Republics
VP	Vantage Point

PAKISTAN- INDIA WAR 1965

Introduction

“We should seek by all means in our power to avoid war, by analysing possible causes, by trying to remove them, by discussion in a spirit of collaboration and good will.”

(Neville Chamberlain)

1. The 1965 war even after a lapse of more than 45 years, still holds importance for the students of military history, as it was the first all out war between India and Pakistan. It took place at a time when the scars of partition were still somewhat fresh. Absence of sound political institutions had rendered the successive governments weak, resulting in lack of effective policy and strategy on Kashmir issue. There was also no higher institutional training of senior officers as the first War Course had just begun in 1963. It was a war which also brought out the best in the nation. The people of Pakistan accepted India's challenge defiantly, stood resolutely behind their armed forces and, thus, were a source of strength and inspiration for them. The Pakistan armed forces proved their mettle against an adversary many times larger than their size.

2. Despite the half truths and lack of objective literature, the analysis of 1965 war still contains significant lessons, the lessons about inadequacy of coherent operational thought for accomplishment of the ends of strategy, lessons relating to inability of strategy to comprehend the process of escalation and second and third tier effects of war and the lessons relating to importance of assumptions on which a strategy is developed, the importance of exterior manoeuvre and requirement of an effective diplomatic strategy. These and other such lessons, as they now relate to contemporary obtaining environment, can all be learnt afresh.

3. The panel has therefore endeavoured to present the pre-war events and the general war as an interlinked, sequential and logical process undertaken for resolution of Kashmir dispute and then draw relevant lessons.

4. **Aim.** To critically analyse the Pakistan-India War 1965 from a strategic and operational perspective, with a view to drawing pertinent lessons for the future.
5. **Scheme of Presentation.** The study will be covered in five parts as under:-
 - a. **Part I.** International, Regional, Domestic and Operational Environment.
(Lieutenant Colonel Zafar Iqbal)
 - b. **Part II.** Conduct of Land Operations.
(Lieutenant Colonel Tariq Mahmood, SJ)
 - c. **Part III.** Conduct and Analysis – Air Operations.
(Group Captain Nasser –ul-Haq)
 - d. **Part IV.** Conduct and Analysis – Naval Operations.
(Captain Mushtaq Ahmed, TI (M))
 - e. **Part V.** Analysis and Lessons Learnt.
(Lieutenant Colonel Tahir Malik)

PART – I

POLITICAL AND OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT

Historical Perspective

1. In order to ascertain the pre-war environment and understand the correct perspective of the whole issue and identify *Casus Bellei*, it is imperative to keep historical records in view. Muslims invaded India and ruled for over eight hundred years, without forcing their values or religion on the Hindus. During their rule, Muslims maintained tolerance and harmony towards Hindus and Hinduism but Hindus had not accepted those aliens happily. For them, it was a marriage of convenience and these followers of *Chankia Kotalia* awaited a chance to avenge.

2. War of Independence of 1857 provided Hindus the opportunity to join new masters for settling the score with the old ones. Their main aim was not only the revenge, but re-establishment of *Maha Bharat*. Therefore, Hindus were not only quick to adapt to the new system of governance, acquired education and jobs but also instigated the British in discrimination and domination of Muslims in every field. The Hindus went all out in their efforts; initially to annihilate the social, educational, cultural and religious heritage, followed by forcible conversion of non-Hindus to Hinduism through organized movements like Shudhi and Sangathan. Religious confrontations led to communal bloody riots, yet Muslim League did not divorce the concept of Hindu-Muslim unity and tried hard to repair the damage that had been caused due to communal riots and bellicosity of the Congress leaders. Communal riots gave birth to right wing extremist parties like Mahasaba, Jana Sangha, Vishwa Hindu Parishad and Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh. These parties not only professed *Hindu Raj* but also the expulsion of Muslims from India, as Jews were expelled from Germany. In addition to right wing parties, the Congress rule was nothing less than a nightmare for the Muslims. They were ruthlessly persecuted and subjected to the worst kind of humiliations. These circumstances convinced Muslims to follow *Two Nation Theory* and shift their struggle for a separate homeland instead of *united India*.

3. Hundreds of years of bias and bigotry against Muslims created Pakistan, which was an end to Hindus dream of *Akhand Bharat*. Hindu leadership's treacherous scheming became instrumental in violating the spirit of the instrument of partition for which they went beyond any principles to utilize their British master, Mountbatten. He called the rulers of all princely states and

dissuaded them from joining Pakistan, including Kashmir, Jaisalmer and Jodhpur. Nizam of Hyderabad was even denied of the option of staying independent. It facilitated Indians and they were able to forcefully occupy Kashmir, Hyderabad, and Junagarh. On the other hand despite an overwhelming vote by Punjab and Bengal Assemblies to join Pakistan these provinces were divided unjustly by Radcliff Commission. Gurdaspur and Ferozepur in spite of being Muslims majority areas were given to India, because they were crucial for Bharat. Gurdaspur was the only land-link to Kashmir and Ferozepur was the only ordnance depot that should have been part of Pakistan. Both cities were denied to Pakistan and were ethnically cleansed so that the populations could not create problems for Bharat later¹.

4. On 15 August 1947, Maharaja Hari Singh's status as the ruler of the state of Jammu and Kashmir had ceased, due to lapse of all treaties made between princely states and the British, vide Article VII of the Indian Independence Act of 1947. Though Maharaja had no right to sign the instrument of accession contrary to the wishes of Muslim majority (if at all he signed that) but Mountbatten's suggestion of Indian military assistance made it possible. It resulted into landing of Indian forces, reinforcing Batala state forces in Kashmir Valley. It infuriated Muslims and forced them to revolt and tribes men from North Western Region also joined the armed struggle. Acting C-in-C of Pakistan Army, General Gracey's non-execution of Quaid's orders in contrast to prompt conduct by the British officers on Indian side during 1947-48 War had far reaching strategic consequences. Actual ceasefire was effected on 1 January 1949, as it suited India, resulting in occupation of a sizeable territory liberated earlier by Azad and Gilgit Scouts from Indian forces. UNSC resolution promised a free and fair plebiscite under aegis of UN for the resolution of Kashmir dispute².

5. Indians, by raising minor issues, diverted the focus and delayed appointment of UN Administrator for plebiscite. Subsequent UNSC resolutions of 1949-52 affirmed the principles of demilitarization and plebiscite. Ignoring the powers and authority of UN representative for organizing and conducting the plebiscite, the government in office could not take any initiative out of UN Resolutions. In 1953 large scale conflagration erupted in Kashmir but Prime Minister Bogra's generous attitude towards Nehru diffused the Kashmir issue, when developments in the Indian

¹Pradhat R.D., *1965 War The Inside Story*. (New Delhi: Rajouri Garden, 2007),

²Indian Independence Act 1947, *Wikipedia Site*, available from http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Indian_Independence_Act_1947.

occupied area itself had brought it to an intense pitch. Considering outside UN settlement as an alternative strategy, bilateral talks were resorted to, but, India opposed to US, English or Russian plebiscite administrator and intended to maintain quantum of troops.

6. In 1954, Pakistan's entry into western sponsored alliance entirely changed the complexion of the Kashmir dispute. It offered political ground to Mr Nehru to deviate from the commitment of plebiscite, demilitarization and also made Pak-Soviet relations hostile. In view of changing pattern of power relations in west and South Asia, and economic, political and strategic factors surrounding Kashmir, Pakistan had to revert back to UN during 1957-62. However, UN reaffirmation and willingness by Pakistan to keep UN force on her side did not break the stalemate and encouraged India to include Jammu and Kashmir as one of the States by 7th amendment to their Constitution. Due to ongoing settlement of water dispute and emerging threat from North, Pakistan offered joint defence between India and Pakistan against China and USSR. Instead of evoking conciliatory response from India, it instead affirmed Indians resolve, implying has no impelling urgency of Kashmir.

7. Indian forces moved to Pakistani border in 1961 during the invasion of Goa, and forced Pakistan to seek UN assistance through US but this time the resolution was vetoed by USSR. The British and US pressure prevailed on Pakistan during Indo-Sino War of 1962 and Pakistan in spite of having compatible military strength, missed an opportunity of attacking India to claim her legitimate and internationally recognized position over an area yet to be demarcated. Pakistan's inaction developed pressure over UK and US, did bring India on six round ministerial talks but US pressure on Pakistan for giving some concessions broke the talks without any success meaning real freezing of the issue. US and UK provided substantial military assistance to India against Communist China.

8. Such antithetical developments, forced the President Ayub Khan to rethink the policy towards China as already suggested by Mr Bhutto. It enabled Pakistan to finalize an agreement with China in March 1963 to settle boundary between China and Kashmir, not under Indian control. The disappearance of a holy relic at Hazratbal led into mass upsurge of the resentment against Indian Occupation in 1963. The government of India was shaken by the evidently spontaneous revolt, however, a UN resolution could not be moved due to US obsessive concern with China and her anxiety to placate India. Pakistan's leadership could not appreciate the situation

correctly to take advantage of the situation at international fora and did not make prudent decisions³.

Environment - Pakistan

9. **External - Environment.** The world scene has changed so much in that it is necessary to recreate the environment of 1965 war for a proper understanding of the attitudes and roles of major world powers. After World War II, the international environment was characterized by a Cold War between two super powers and the world was largely divided into two blocks, each led by a super power, while a third block of lesser significance known as the Non-Aligned Movement had also emerged. Pakistan formed part of the Western Block while India chose to remain non-aligned. However, by early sixties the international situation was in a state of flux due to Sino-Soviet rift, Sino-US discord, Sino-Indian War and Cuban confrontation. The Indo-Pak War of 1965 needs to be studied, while keeping in mind the changing alignments of the major powers in the international realpolitik, as follows:-

a. United States of America

- (1) During 1950s, geo-strategic significance of Pakistan and Indian non-alignment resulted into US-Pak friendship resulting into Pakistan's entry into SEATO and CENTO, in line with US policy of containing communism. Western alliances provided Pakistan economic aid and helped develop sizeable military muscle. Pakistan made up deficiencies of 1 ½ armour and four infantry divisions⁴. Aid being conditional was not to be used against non-communist countries. Indian tilt towards USSR further strengthened relationship.
- (2) 1962 Sino-Indian conflict brought a significant shift in USA policy in this region. US showed pro-Indian bias and thought that a militarily and economically strong India, which is hostile to China, would be in their interest. Following Kuchh episode, US attitude towards Pakistan became lukewarm, she curtailed aid and later during 1965 War,

³ Government of Pakistan, *White Papers on the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute* (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 1977), 1-3.

⁴ Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008), 96-97.

stopped at all together. US ambassador in India, Chester Bowles felt no inhibition in stating that “it was bad arithmetic to alienate 360 million Indians in order to aid 80 million Pakistanis who are split into two sections, divided by 1000 miles of Indian Territory”⁵.

- (3) After disappearance of holy relic at Hazratbal shrine, US clearly declared Kashmir dispute as bilateral issue and moved reluctantly with calculated response and even demanded concessions from Pakistan in moving UN resolution during Indo-Pak ministerial level talks⁶.

b. **USSR**

- (1) Pakistan did not develop very friendly relations with USSR at the outset however, she remained supportive on subsequent UN resolutions during early 1950s but Pakistan’s entry into SEATO and CENTO alienated USSR.
- (2) Pakistan’s membership of US sponsored security alliances; provision of airbase and ‘U-2 incident’ further widened the existing gulf and Soviets declared Kashmir as Northern part of India⁷.
- (3) President Ayub’s repeated reference of threat from North subverted the efforts of Foreign Minister Bhutto to ease relations and USSR later vetoed UN resolution on Kashmir in 1960⁸.
- (4) After Sino-Indian conflicts US re-alignment with India created disenchantment in Pakistan against US. As a result of rethinking of policy, Ayub became 1st Pakistani head of state visiting USSR in April 1965. Soviets did

⁵ Ibid

⁶ Altaf Gauhar, *Ayub khan Pakistan’s first military Ruler* (Lahore: Sanage-e-Meel, 1993) 254-271.

⁷ Shuja Nawaz, *Crossed Swords* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008), 130.

⁸ Government of Pakistan, *White Papers on the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute* (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 1977), 35-67.

not alienate Pakistan during Kutch fighting and made oil deal.

- c. **China.** In early 1960s antithetical developments in the region to Pakistan's assumptions brought Pakistan closer to China and Pakistan started moving away from the theme of Joint Defence with India, against Russia and China. Sino-India conflict of 1962 provided impetus to growing relations and both countries strengthened their political, economic and military ties through host of treaties. The most significant ones were resolution of border dispute and construction of Karakoram Highway. Nehru viewed the growing Sino-Pak relations as a threat to India's security. Foreign office provided assurance that in case of war with India, China will provide support to Pakistan.⁹
- d. **Afghanistan.** Soviet Union as well as India had reasonable amount of influence in Afghanistan. Pakistan's relations with her were not very cordial since it had raised the question of Pakhtoonistan and had laid claim to portions of Pakistan North West Frontier Province. In case of Indo-Pak war, Pakistan expected that Afghanistan was to stay neutral, however, Indians were expecting that she would have some activity to at least tie one division size strength of Pakistan on her western border.¹⁰
- e. **Muslim Countries.** Pakistan's relations with the Muslims world were cordial. The Arab countries provided economic support to Pakistan. Iran and Turkey being fellow members of CENTO and RCD had deep rooted bonds of friendship and were expected to be trusted for moral and material support. However, the events proved that except for some economic and moral support, no material support in the form of air/naval crafts and tanks was received from any of the Muslims country. Only Indonesia had sent two submarines and four missile boats, but these too reached after ceasefire. Iran and

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Turkey restricted their aid to ammunition/explosives only.¹¹

- f. **Relations with India.** Failure to abide by UNSC resolutions and finalization of a truce on the principle of plebiscite and demilitarization was the irritants after the partition. Later declaring Kashmir as *ATOOTANG ie an integral* part of India, through constitutional amendments, political deadlock and failure of talks froze Kashmir dispute issue.¹²

10. Internal - Environment

a. Political

- (1) President Ayub Khan was the head of state and supreme commander of armed forces.¹³ The government had no constitutional body like Defence Committee of Cabinet. Opposition parties were virtually absent or playing an insignificant/dormant role. National Assembly was a weak body and it was a sort of controlled democracy.
- (2) Decision-making, instead of being institutionalized, was personalized and restricted between close groups of the President.
- (3) On resolution of Kashmir, leadership lacked appreciation, was indecisive, divided with profound external influence.
- (4) On failure of Indo-Pak talks on Kashmir, Foreign office was tasked to prepare plan to defreeze Kashmir issue in consultation with the General Headquarters.
- (5) Foreign Minister Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto had given assurance in National Assembly in 1963 that in case of war, Pakistan would be helped by China, whom he termed as the most powerful nation in Asia.

¹¹ Singh, Maj General (Retd) Lachhman Leh, PVSM, Vrc, Missed Opportunities Indo – Pak War 1965 (Dehra Dun: natraj Publishers, 1997), 68.

¹² Government of Pakistan, White Papers on the Jammu and Kashmir Dispute (Islamabad: Government of Pakistan, 1977), 35-67.

¹³ Altaf Gauhar, Ayub Khan Pakistan's first military Ruler (Lahore: Sanage-e-Meel, 1993) 288-303.

- (6) East Pakistani politicians had voiced their differences and concerns, inspite of launching 2nd five year plan.
 - (7) President's visit to China had transformed the political climate to his favour and the opposition melted away.
 - b. **Runn of Kutch Fighting.** The episode of Runn of Kutch in April 1965 definitely gave Pakistan a psychological advantage, gave élan and pride to the nation, and its armed forces. The tactical victory, however, was over played. Indian Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri blaming Pakistan for initiating aggression, stated that "India reserved the right of avenging at the time and place of its choosing". The statement was, however, not taken seriously by Pakistan.¹⁴
 - c. **Economy.** The comparative stability and foreign aid resulted in the uplift of country's economy. Industrial base was enlarged and agriculture improved. The early 1960s saw the country developing and economy improving at a fast pace, with a growth rate of 12.5 % per annum, a world record at that time. This resulted in the enhancement of national confidence and morale.¹⁵
11. **Operational - Environment**
- a. **Pakistan's Operational Preparedness.** After Pak-US Defence Agreement of 1956, Pakistan during the period of 1954-65 received \$ 650 million in military grants, \$ 619 million in defence support assistance and \$55 million in cash for commercial purchases, thus putting her in a better state of equipment and training. The aid enhanced Pakistan's defence capability, by increasing firepower, mobility, and improving command, control, communications and intelligence (C³I) facilities. Its 250, 000 troops were organised into seven infantry and two armoured divisions; Air force was equipped with the latest F-104 Jet aircrafts, while the Navy was the only submarine operating force in the region¹⁶.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ National Defence University, 1965 War (Islamabad: NDU, 2004), 3-6.

¹⁶ Shuja Nawaz, Crossed Swords (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2008), 130.

- b. **Operational Readiness.** Pakistan Army as a consequence of operations in Rann of Kutch had taken to the field and was operationally prepared for the war. After the de-escalation the armoured divisions were retained in their assembly areas on either side of River Ravi and were in a better state of operational preparedness.
- c. **Relative Strength of Land Forces.** The relative strength of the two armies at the outbreak of war was¹⁷:-

Arm	India	Pakistan	Ratio
Infantry	9 x Divisions	7 x Divisions	1.3:1
	5 x Independent Brigades	1 x Independent Brigade	5:1
Armour	1 x Division	1 x Division	1.2:1
	1 x Independent Armoured Brigade (1000xAFV)	1x Light Division (800xAFV)	
Artillery	98 Firing Units	46 Firing Units	2.1:1
Special Forces	1 x Para Battalion	1 x SSG Battalion	1:1
Bayonet Strength	850,000	250,000	3.5:1

- d. **Armour/Artillery Peculiarities**¹⁸
- (1) Pakistan's 6 Armoured Division had only three armoured regiments.
- (2) Pakistan was qualitatively superior in tanks. M 47 and M 48 had 90 mm gun with 1500 yards range vis-à-vis Indian centurion which had 84 mm guns with 1100 yards range.
- (a) Pakistan had 17 x Armoured Regiments as follows:-
- i. 352 x Pattons (9 x Regiments)
- ii. 308 x Sherman (5 x Regiments)

¹⁷ Leh, Maj General (Retd) Lachhman Singh PVSM, Vrc, Missed Opportunities Indo – Pak War 1965 (Dehra Dun: natraj Publishers, 1997), 68.

¹⁸ Ibid.

- iii. 96 x Chaffes (3 x Regiments)
- (b) India had 16 x Regiments as follow:-
 - i. 186 x Centurions (4 x Regiments)
 - ii. 332 x Sherman (9 x Regiments, 1 under raising)
 - iii. 90 x AMX (2 x Regiments)
 - iv. 150 PT 76 (1 x Regiment under conversion)
- (3) Indians had nothing in comparison with heavy 155 mm gun and 8 inch howitzer. Comparison of the sides is as follow:-
 - (a) **Pakistan**
 - i. 72 x 105 mm Howitzer
 - ii. 234 x 25 pounder/105 mm Howitzer
 - iii. 126 x 155 mm Howitzer
 - iv. 48 x 155 mm gun/8" Howitzer
 - v. 72 x 3.7" Howitzer/25 Pounder
 - (b) **India (16 x Regiments)**
 - i. 66 x 3.7" Howitzer
 - ii. 450 x 25 Pounder
 - iii. 96 x 5.5" Howitzer
 - iv. 16 x 7.2" Howitzer
- e. **Qualitative Edge.** Under military aids programme of US, the armed forces had absorbed the new equipment and in 1965 her main strength lay in her qualitative edge in armour, artillery and superior organisation of infantry divisions.
- f. **Air/ Naval Situation.** Pakistan's aircrafts were generally superior in quality than the Indian aircrafts. Pakistan's operational bases were closer to the main areas of operations. Both the countries had a small navy, though India had an aircraft carrier as well.
- g. **Logistics.** Pakistan had limited logistic stamina. Main imbalance was its entire dependence on foreign sources of major equipment and ammunition. Our capacity for waging a war of attrition was limited as compared to India.

- h. **Morale.** After the Runn of Kutch operations, Pakistani armed forces were more motivated and enjoyed a higher state of morale.
 - i. **Civil Affairs.** From its colonial roots, Pakistan Army had slowly transformed into a professional Army. However, Pakistan Army was constantly dragged into assisting civil power and resulting in there involvement in martial law, which left its marks on the overall character of the Army.
12. **Environment-India**
- a. **External-Environement.** India under the wise leadership of Nehru, used the democratic leverage with the Western World and non-alignment with the Soviet Block. She also managed to fare well with the Muslims World. As such India benefited from her dual-faced policy and received economic and military assistance from both the camps, particularly USSR. In wake of Pakistan's uneasy relations with Moscow after U-2 spy plane incident, India developed even closer ties with Soviet Union and utilized Soviet veto against any move by Pakistan in the United Nations¹⁹. After 1962 Sino-Indian conflict, a strong India fitted well in the policy of containment of China by the two super powers. Capitalizing on Sino-Indian conflict India received long term and emergency assistance both from US \$ 47 million and UK provided an aid £ 120 millions. By the time 1965 War begun, the Indian Army had been substantially equipped and re-organized.
 - b. **Internal-Environment**
 - (1) **Political**
 - (a) Indian Government's decision to absorb Indian Held Kashmir in India was drawing protests from abroad, but the people supported their government.
 - (b) In 1963, the situation in Indian Held Kashmir had become volatile, due to the incident of stealth of Holy Relic from Hazratball. Ruthless measures

¹⁹ Maj General (Retd) Lachhman Singh leh, PVSM, Vrc, Missed Opportunities Indo – Pak War 1965 (Dehra Dun: natraj Publishers, 1997), 32-68.

were taken, including taking political activists in custody²⁰.

- (c) Nehru's death in 1964 gave a stunning blow to Indian leadership. Shastri was considered to be a weak leader.
- (2) **Economy.** Over the years, India had gradually expanded her industrial base. Though their defence budget had mounted from Rs 300 crores in 1962 to Rs 800 crores in 1965, however, their economy by and large was weak and there was food shortage in the country.
- (3) **Psychological.** Humiliating defeat suffered in the hand of Chinese and Pakistan Army in Runn of Kutch brought bad name to Indian Army and created an environment of disillusionment. Government and the Armed Forces awaited an opportunity to restore their honour and national pride.
- c. **Operational-Environment.** After Sino-Indian War defeat, India had received substantial aid and had expanded from 11 to 19 infantry divisions, besides reorganization and modernization of armed forces. They had also established a base for indigenous defence production. However, in 1965 their armed forces were partially equipped were still in the process of expansion, while the indigenous production had not yet fully geared to support a war²¹.

Effects of the Prevailing Environment

13. **Pakistan.** Having attained a qualitative edge in military potential, and given a stunning blow to the Indian Army in Kutch, Pakistan had attained a moral ascendancy over India. This, combined with the events in Indian Held Kashmir (IHK), Indian intransigence and timid role of US over the resolution of Kashmir issue, made Pakistani leadership to believe that the time was the most apt for applying military means for the settlement of Kashmir issue. It was also felt that growing military aid to India and consequent narrowing of the gap between the two may not give another opportunity to Pakistan in future.

²⁰ Ibid, 20-30

²¹ Ibid, 68.

14. **India.** For India time was not opportune for a conflict since she had embarked upon ambitious re-armament and re-organization programme of her armed forces. She needed time to absorb the foreign military hardware and to train her armed forces. However, there was a pressing need to restore the confidence of the people and the men in uniform, after their debacle in 1962 and their poor performance in Kutch.

15. Thus in 1965, most of the elements were considered favourable for resolution of Kashmir dispute. The balance sheet indicated that although the balance of power had shifted in favour of India, yet it was not decisive. Pakistan had, with some measure of success, re-orientated and allied herself with new friends.

War Aims

16. Based on the research of this Panel, following aims could be derived from various sources:-

- a. **Pakistan.** 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.
- b. **India.** By an active use of Indian conventional forces retain control over Indian Held Kashmir. In case of an unacceptable pressure in Kashmir, carry out a thrust into Western Punjab and capture maximum Pakistani territory to be at a strong bargaining position.

17. **Operations in East Pakistan.** These were restricted to a few air raids by PAF against Indian airbases around Calcutta and these have been covered in air operations (Part III).

PART II LAND OPERATIONS

General

1. 1965 War commenced with limited objectives and operations in Kashmir but gradually escalated to a full scale war. Major operations conducted during the war, not including Runn of Kutch, will be discussed here, are:

- a. Operation GIBRALTAR
- b. Operation GRAND SLAM
- c. Operation RIDDLE in Lahore-Kasur Sector
- d. Pakistani Counter Stroke in Khem Karan
- e. Operation NEPAL in Sialkot Sector
- f. Operations in the South

Operation GIBRALTAR

2. **Assumptions.** Operation GIBRALTAR was launched, based on following assumptions:-

- a. Pakistan Army had gained moral ascendancy over her Indian counterpart during Runn of Kutch conflict.
- b. After the Sino-Indian Conflict, Indian Army was going through large scale re-organisation and raisings and was in a state of flux. If allowed sufficient time for absorption of new equipment, she would increase the capability gap to an unmanageable extent, thereby, permanently closing the window of opportunity for application of military option.
- c. Political situation in Kashmir was considered as unstable, in which masses could be prompted into a revolt and general insurgency, which could be suitably followed by regular military action.
- d. The new Indian leadership was considered to be weak and inept to deal with challenge of this magnitude.
- e. While dealing with such insurgency, Indians would keep the conflict localized, thereby, avoiding an all out war across international border.
- f. The overall international climate was assumed to be in Pakistan's favour.
- g. Chinese support to Pakistan was reasonably assured.

3. **Military Aims.** The military aims of the operation were threefold²²:

- a. To disrupt Indian civil and military control of the state of Indian Held Kashmir. To carryout massive sabotage activities in the valley, cause break down of communication, insitigate people and foment agitation, thereby, marginalizing the effectiveness of state apparatus and disorganise Indian control of the state.
- b. To encourage, assist and direct an armed revolt by the people of Kashmir against Indian military occupation. Encourage, recruit, train and assist the people of Indian Held Kashmir to wage a liberation struggle against Indian military occupation.
- c. To create conditions for an advance by the Azad Kashmir forces into the heart of occupied Kashmir and eventual liberation of Indian Held Kashmir. Seek commitment of sizeable Indian forces in Indian Held Kashmir.

Zone of Operation

4. The area of Operation GIBRALTAR was divided into six zones:-

- a. **Northern Zone.** Area north of Srinagar, extending from general line Kel and Wullar Lake to Dras with heights up to 18000 feet. It was sparsely populated area and provided a possible approach for infiltration into Srinagar Valley from the north.
- b. **Handwara Zone.** Area bounded by line Kel-Wullar Lake in the east, River Jhelum in the south and Cease Fire Line in North West.
- c. **Srinagar Zone.** General areas Baramula, Gulmarg, Islamabad, and Srinagar. The main infiltration routes into this Zone originated from the area of Bedori Bulge.
- d. **Naushera-Rajauri Zone.** Areas of Naushera, Rajauri and Poonch Valleys, which were inter-connected.
- e. **Budil Zone.** Areas of Pir Panjal Pass, Riasi and Ramban which provide access against enemy's strategic line of communication.

²² Lieutenant General Mahmood Ahmed (Retired), History of Indo-Pak War-1965, Services Book Club, p 29.

- f. **Jammu Zone.** Areas of Udhampur, Jammu, Samba and Kathua in which affiliations of the locals did not allow large-scale guerrilla operation.

Opposing Forces in Kashmir

5. **Pakistan Defensive Effort.** 12 Division commanded by Major General Akhtar Hussain Malik was responsible for Kashmir Sector from Karakorum Pass to Chenab River. Entire front was divided onto six sectors; Northern Areas, four Kashmir Sectors and working boundary sector. Details are:-

- a. **Northern Areas**
 - (1) **Commander.** DIG Northern Areas.
 - (2) **Area of Responsibility.** Karakorum Pass to Athmuqam.
 - (3) **Troops.** Northern Scouts, Karakorum Scouts, Gilgit Scouts.
- b. **Sector-1**
 - (1) **Commander.** Brigadier Fazle Rehman Khilji
 - (2) **Area of Responsibility.** From Athmuqam (Neelum Valley) to Pir Kanthi (Jhelum Valley).
 - (3) **Troops.** Two regular and two Azad Kashmir (AK) battalions.
- c. **Sector-2**
 - (1) **Commander.** Brigadier Rafique.
 - (2) **Area of Responsibility.** Pir Kanthi to Hot Springs (guarding Bagh and Hajira Valleys).
 - (3) **Troops.** Three AK battalions.
- d. **Sector-3**
 - (1) **Commander.** Brigadier Qazi Abdul Wahid
 - (2) **Area of Responsibility.** Hot Springs to Mirpur (guarding Kotli Approach).
 - (3) **Troops.** One regular and six AK battalions.
- e. **Sector-4**
 - (1) **Commander.** Brigadier Abdul Hamid Khan.
 - (2) **Area of Responsibility.** Mirpur to junction of Cease Fire Line with Working Boundary near Burejal (guarding Bhimber Approach).
 - (3) **Troops.** One regular and four AK battalions.
- f. **Working Boundary**
 - (1) **Commander.** Brigadier Zafar Ali
 - (2) **Area of Responsibility.** Burejal to river Chenab

- (3) **Troops.** 102 Independent Brigade Group with three regular infantry battalions (9 Punjab, 13 Punjab and 8 Baloch), 2 Field Regiment, a tank Squadron and Azad Kashmir irregular Force elements.

6. **Pakistan Offensive Forces**

- a. **GIBRALTAR Force.** The force consisted of about 7000 troops, organized in six groups. Each comprised three or more companies. Due to limited scope of its operations, Babur Force was a platoon size group of 34 men. No regular troops formed part of the force except officers and a few other ranks from Special Services Group. The details are as under:-

Serial	Group	Area of Operation	Commander
(1)	Tariq	Kargil	Major Sikandar
(2)	Qasim	Gurez	Major Murtaza
(3)	Khalid	Tithwal	Major Meraj Din
(4)	Ghaznavi	Budil	Major Munawar
(5)	Salahuddin	Gulmarg	Lt Col Mansha Khan
(6)	Babur	Udhampur	Major Nazir

- b. **NUSRAT Force.** A complimentary force, comprising 14 groups having 350 men each was assigned the following tasks:-

- (1) Fix the Indian forces along the Cease Fire Line.
- (2) Provide secure routes of infiltration to the other groups.
- (3) Ensure periodic supply to the GIBRALTAR Force.

7. **India.** 15 Corps, commanded by Lieutenant General Kashmir Singh Katoch, was responsible for Indian Held Kashmir and Ladakh area. It had four infantry divisions, five independent infantry brigades and a large number of second line forces. Corps Headquarters was at Udhampur with its troops deployed as under:-

	Formation	Location
a.	3 Infantry Division	Leh
b.	19 Infantry Division	Baramula
c.	25 Infantry Division	Rajauri
d.	10 Infantry Division	Akhnur
e.	Sri Force (Raised during the operation)	Srinagar

8. **Design of Operation.** General Akhtar envisaged operation to be conducted in two phases: first phase was to create a shock wave by launching raiding attacks on selected targets and thus prepare the ground for general uprising. The second phase was incorporation of the civil uprising in the guerrilla operations and, therefore, it depended entirely on the success of the first phase.²³ 12 Division, less GIBRALTAR and NUSRAT Forces, were to defend the Cease Fire Line.

9. **Scheme of Operation.** Launch six groups of infiltrators across Cease Fire Line while seventh group (NUSRAT Force) to fix enemy all along the Cease Fire Line. Infiltration force was distributed as under:-

- a. **Main Effort.** Comprising TARIQ, QASIM, KHALID and SALAHUDDIN Forces against Srinagar Valley. Details are as under:

(1) **TARIQ Force**

- (a) **Force.** Three companies.
- (b) **Operational Area.** Extreme north of Kashmir valley mainly astride Zojila Pass after launching from Gultari through Kaobal Gali.
- (c) **Task.** To dominate and disrupt road Gund-Sonamarge-Zojila, hold Zojila Pass, expand control over the area upto Amrnath, Kolahoi and Gagangir.

(2) **Qasim Force**

- (a) **Force.** Four companies.
- (b) **Operational Area.** North west of Kashmir valley after launching from Shiekh Bela and Kel.
- (c) **Task.** To demolish bridges at Sonarwain, Woyil, Kangan, Dudarhom and culverts on road Bandipura-

²³ Ibid, p 29.

Gandarbal, then continue operations against suitable targets north of line Zinymar-Hazratbal-Nishatbagh, in close liaison with SALAHUDDIN Force.

(3) **KHALID Force**

- (a) **Force.** Four companies.
- (b) **Operational Area.** Infiltration through Shard-Dhudhnial and operate west of Wullar Lake.
- (c) **Task.** To destroy bridges and culverts at Handwara, Sopur and on the road Handwara-Kopwara-Batargam-Trahagam. Also conduct raids on military headquarters, destroy police stations, telegraph and telephone exchanges at Handwara and Sopur and power station at Kopwara. After that expand operations south of river Jhelum.

(4) **SALAHUDDIN Force**

- (a) **Force.** Strongest force, comprising six companies.
- (b) **Operational Area.** Infiltration through Badori Bulge and was to operate in main valley in areas of Baramula, Srinagar, Islamabad, Shupiyan, Pulwama and Gulmerg.
- (c) **Task.** To isolate Srinagar, by demolishing Banihal Pass Tunnels (in cooperation with GHAZNAVI Force) and the bridges on the road Srinagar-Pattan, cut telephone and telegraph lines, destroy Srinagar radio station and Pampur transmitting stations, render Srinagar Airfield unserviceable and destroy all aircrafts on it.

b. **Auxiliary Effort.** Against Naushera-Rajauri Zone by GHAZNAVI and BABUR Forces. Details are:-

(1) **GHAZNAVI Force**

- (a) **Force.** Five companies.

- (b) **Operational Area.** Budil and surrounding areas after infiltration from opposite Khuiratta.
 - (c) **Task.** To destroy bridges at Ramban, Naushehra, Rajuari and Dhanwa Kot, raid and destroy several military headquarters and installations. Then hold Sundar top immediately west of Banihal Pass and deny Road Ramban-Islamabad. Also, assist SALAHUDDIN Force in demolishing of tunnels at Banihal Pass.
- (2) **BABUR Force**
 - (a) **Force.** Smallest force comprising one platoon of 34 men.
 - (b) **Task.** To raid headquarters XV Corps at Udampur and then inflict maximum damage to telephone communications radiating from Udampur.
- c. **Fixation.** By NUSRAT Force as under:-
 - (1) **Force.** NUSRAT Force comprised fourteen groups, each of approximately 350 men.
 - (2) **Operational Area.** All along Cease Fire Line.
 - (3) **Task.** To contain enemy forces deployed along Cease Fire Line. The groups were to infiltrate into Indian Held Kashmir a few days before D Day, set for Operation GIBALTAR, harass enemy holding Ceasefire Fire Line and prevent enemy forces employment in depth against GIBALTAR Forces.
- 10. **Conduct.** The GIBALTAR Force successfully infiltrated in Indian Held Kashmir between 31st July and 4th August 1965, achieving complete surprise in the process. Details of each group are as under:
 - a. **NUSRAT Force.** All the fourteen groups infiltrated all along Cease Fire Line before infiltration of main force commenced.
 - b. **TARIQ Force.** Infiltrated from Gultari and reached their base in Bat Klan Gang, midway to Zojila. The Force raided bridges over Indus River and ambushed columns in vicinity of Gund, Sonamarg, Badoab and

- Badogam. The Force ex-filtrated on 10 September and suffered 10 casualties.
- c. **QASIM Force.** Infiltrated from Kel and established their base north of Bandipura. They raided and destroyed bridges at Gandarbal, Woyil, Kangan and Sonarwain. By the third week of August, the men were near starvation as the movement had become impossible. The Force was supplied through air drops enabling them to maintain themselves until 3rd week of September. The force withdrew by 4th week of September, having suffered 16 casualties.
 - d. **Khalid Force.** Infiltrated through Sharda and Dhudnial. Immediately on crossing Cease Fire Line, all four companies lost wireless contact with Force Commander but continued to move and operate independently. These independent groups raided a few locations but suffered more casualties and reverses. Force Headquarters exfiltrated and again infiltrated during 2nd week of August.
 - e. **SALAHUDDIN Force.** Infiltrated from Bedori Bulge and established itself in Khag Forest south of Gulmerg. One company was left for protection of the camp and the other five companies infiltrated in the suburbs of Srinagar, where they conducted some successful operations. This was the force which caused maximum challenge to Indians along with GHAZNAVI Force. The Force was widely dispersed and Force Commander lost control over the companies by 18 August. Thereafter, enemy started to tighten its noose around the force but the Force managed to slip through the trap, exfiltrated in penny packets, through Kel, Rajauri, Mandi and Chakothi. Losses of the Force were insignificant, three killed, 14 wounded and four captured.
 - f. **GHAZNAVI Force.** This was the most successful of the GIBRALTAR Forces which infiltrated through Rajuari and made its way to Budil area. This Force operated in Mendhar-Rajauri-Chigas-Jhangar area and conducted some successful operations. By 18 August, the group completely controlled Budil with full support of the local people and dominated an area of 500 square miles. This group was finally ordered to exfiltrate on 23 September, which was

- completed by 30 September. This force lost four persons, 16 wounded and 2 were taken prisoners.
- g. **BABUR Force.** Infiltrated on night 4/5 September from Sialkot sector with the mission to raid Headquarters of 15 Indian Corps. This Force ran into Indian columns on road Madhopur-Jammu, ambushed a party on the road and captured important documents which revealed Indian attack plans in Sialkot Sector but complete information could not be made use of before actual Indian attack on 6/7 September 1965.
11. **Indian Response.** Having been shocked and utterly surprised, Indians quickly recovered to counter GIBRALTAR Force, which had failed to achieve the desired effects due to non-cooperation of local population and its own shortcomings. After the initial chase and hunt operations, Indians went to cut operational bases of GIBRALTAR Force. Salients of Indian operations are:-
- a. **Chase and Hunt in Indian Held Kashmir.** On 8 August, the situation in and around Srinagar was precarious and, therefore, the government of Jammu and Kashmir requested the assistance of the Army. Initially, 19 Division was moved from Baramulla to Srinagar to fight the infiltrators. Later Sri Force was raised on 14 August, which took the responsibility of anti-guerrilla operations in the Valley. This force acted promptly, initially restricting the activities of guerrillas and subsequently chasing most of them across the Cease Fire Line.
- b. **Operations across Cease Fire Line.** India decided to launch simultaneous offensive to sever the infiltrators entry routes and to destroy their administrative and staging bases. Indian Army reoccupied vacant posts in Kargil, Uri and Lipa Sectors but main operations were conducted in Jura and Bedori Bulges. Despite a ceasefire on regular borders on 23 September, fighting in Kashmir continued till 20 October.
- (1) **Action in Jura Bulge (Neelum Valley)**
The offensive in Jura Bulge was undertaken by 104 infantry brigade on night 24/25 August. The brigade had 4 battalions. 1 Sikh Battalion attacked and captured Pir Sahaba against lightly held defences by company of

16 AKRF on night 24/25 August. Sarjoi was attacked and captured by 3/8 Gurkha Rifles, against a company of Khyber Rifles on night 3/4 September and Mirpur area on night 10/11 September. On 6 October, Indians resumed their operations to completely reduce Jura Bulge. 4 Kamaon Battalion attacked and captured point 9020 south of Athmuqam and dominated Neelum River in entire Jura Bulge. 12 Division forces comprised of irregular troops and were grossly under strength due to detaching manpower for GIBRALTAR Force.

- (2) **Action in Bedori Bulge.** The operation in Bedori Bulge commenced on 26/27 August. The capture of this Bulge was designed to sever the major ingress routes into Srinagar area and also to destroy the guerrilla bases. It would additionally threaten the important towns of Forward Kahuta, Hajira, Bagh, Rawalakot, inside Azad Kashmir. The old road which ran from Uri to Poonch over 8000 feet at Hajipir Pass could also be made fit for move of troops and supplies between Srinagar and Poonch. The plans and the results of these operations were as under:-

- (a) **Operation Bakhshi.** On night 26/27 August, 68 Brigade, ex-19 Division under Brigadier Bakhshi, planned a two pronged attack from the west and east converging on Hajipir Pass. Eastern prong progressed well while western prong met stiff resistance initially. However, the two prongs finally linked up at Hajipir pass by 28 August.
- (b) **Operation Faulad.** 93 Brigade ex-25 Division planned to achieve link-up operation from Poonch northwards, by capturing a series of picquets en-route to Forward Kahuta. Attack from south commenced on 25 August by attacking Raja feature and Chand Tekri. After clearing the crust by 30

August, final assault on these features was launched on 1/2 September. This offensive was blunted which delayed the link-up. The operation was again launched four days later on night 5/6 September and positions at Chand Tekri were captured. Northern prong also progressed towards Kahuta and finally link-up was established between two prongs at Kahuta on 10 September by Meghdoot Force.

Operation GRAND SLAM

12. **General.** By end of August, the situation in Kashmir became quite alarming for Pakistan as Operation GIBRALTAR could not yield desired results and India's counter actions put 12 Division in serious trouble. The precarious situation of the Pakistan Army after loss of Haji Pir Pass and threat to Muzaffarabad through Tithwal in the wake of Operation GIBRALTAR, served as the primary reason for launching of Operation GRAND SLAM by Pakistan, on 1 September 1965. Operation GRAND SLAM was a contingency plan to be executed in case Operation GIBRALTAR ran into trouble. It envisaged limited offensive from Bhimber for capturing Akhnur and threatening enemy's line of communication to Kashmir.

13. **Aim of the Operation.** Since Road Jammu-Akhnur-Naushehra-Jhangar-Dharamsal ran perilously close to the border, the limited offensive from Bhimber was considered appropriate to achieve the strategic effects. The aim of operation was, therefore, to relieve pressure on 12 Division by capturing Akhnur, with a view to severing area south of Pir Panjal. General Officer Commanding 12 Division was once again responsible for this operation.

14. **Design of Operation.** The operation was launched in a relative vacuum and was designed to isolate the Indian forces in Indian Held Kashmir. The plan was designed to exploit the armour and artillery superiority. The tanks were to outflank the minor oppositions to gain speed in the operation. To control escalation, the attack was to be launched across Cease Fire Line.

15. **Area of Operation.** The area of operation lies between Jhangar in the north and River Chenab in the south, commonly known as Munawwar Gap. Flanked by Kali Dhar hills in the north, a number of perennial streams flow from the foothills into River Chenab, thus cutting across the direction of attack. Munawwarwali-

Tawi River (commonly known as Tawi) is one of the main perennial tributaries of Chenab but it was fordable at many places. The rolling landscape of Munawwar is tank-able throughout, except in the north. There were mainly two roads running through the gap, one from Akhnur through Jaurian to Chhamb and the other north of it via Kalith and Mandiala. A number of tracks sustained the operation up to Chhamb, while River Chenab provided flank protection.

16. Opposing Forces

- a. **India.** 191 Infantry Brigade with five infantry battalions was deployed in Chhamb Sector. Additional troops were squadron armour (AMX 13 tanks), a field regiment and a battery of medium guns. On the commencement of Pakistani operation, on 1 September, 191 Indian Brigade was deployed in Akhnur area as under:-

(1)	HQ 191 Brigade	-	Mandiala
(2)	6 Light Infantry-		Along Cease Fire Line at Burejal- Pir Jamal
(3)	3 Mahar	-	Area Mandiala
(4)	6/5 Gorkha Rifles	-	Area Kali Dhar

- b. **Pakistan.** The troops assigned for the mission totalled a little over three brigades and two armour regiments. Details are as under:-

Ser	Unit/Formation	Commander	Formation
(1)	10 Brigade	Brigadier Azmat Hayat	7 Division
(2)	25 Brigade		7 Division
(3)	102 Brigade	Brigadier Zafar Ali	12 Division
(4)	19 AK	Major Ali Akbar	Sector 4
(5)	11 Cavalry	Lt Col M Aziz	6 Armoured Division
(6)	13 Lancers		6 Armoured Division
(7)	4 Corps Artillery	Brigadier Amjad	4 Corps
(8)	Reserves. Located at Gujrat included:-		
(a)	Headquarters	7 Division Major General Yahya Khan	
(b)	14 Para Brigade		-
(c)	22 Cavalry		-

(General Officer Commanding's Headquarters was located at Murree, with tactical headquarters at Kharian and advance tactical Headquarters at Bhimber)

17. **Plan.** The plan envisaged capture of Akhnur and move to Rajauri in three phases as under:-

- a. **Phase 1.** Capture of area west of Tawi River upto and including line Pir Jamal-Ullanwali-Mandiala by 1200 hours D+1 and destroy enemy in the area. Troops assigned were 19 AK with some tanks ex-4 Sector and 102 Brigade supported by 11 Cavalry.
- b. **Phase 2.** Commencing mid-day D+1, to break out across Tawi, cut the Road Akhnur-Jammu and capture of Akhnur by 10 Brigade supported by 13 Lancers by D+2.
- c. **Phase 3.** 102 Brigade to operate on Axis Akhnur-Jhangar-Dharamsal to advance towards Naushera and link up with 25 Brigade, which simultaneously would infiltrate from Khuiretta, operating against

enemy lines of communication Naushera-Jhangar-Dharamsal. After link-up at Naushehra, both brigades to turn north and capture Rajauri.

- d. **Fire Support.** These were 10 field, 7 medium and 2 heavy batteries

18. **Conduct.** The offensive in Chhamb Sector came as a complete surprise to the Indians as they had always suspected such a venture in Naushera-Jhangar Sector. Ground offensive was preceded by 1½ hour of artillery shelling. 102 Brigade troops crossed forming up place at 0500 hours between Moel and Dhella and cleared defences by 0700 hours. By 1200 hours, line Chak Pandit-Jhairowal-Phagla had been cleared and troops were fighting around Chhamb. On night 1/2 September, Indians vacated Chhamb under pressure and the town was in Pakistani hands by 1st light on 2 September with all enemy withdrawn to west of the river. 10 Brigade, however, could not commence with planned advance across Tawi in the morning of 2 September, which was presumably delayed pending change of command ceremony between 12 and 7 Divisions. This delayed the attack across river considerably. Finally, 10 brigade established bridge-head across river Tawi between Palanwala and Gagrial by 1910 hours, commencing operation at 1730 hours. Further advance to capture Jaurian commenced at 1230 hours on 3 September. This gave enough time to Indian troops to strengthen their defensive positions. 41 Indian Brigade occupied intermediate defensive position at line Kalith-Troti-Jaurian, while 191 Brigade was taking up defences for Akhnur. 28 Indian Brigade was called up to take another defensive position between 41 Brigade and Akhnur along Mawawali Khud. By the evening of 3 September, Troti had been contacted and Nawan Hamirpur had been captured. On 4 September, 102 Brigade handed over defences at Chhamb to 6 Brigade and joined 10 Brigade in attack, being on the left. Jaurian position was captured on night 4/5 September, instead of 2/3 September, as per original plan. The same day 10 Brigade contacted Indian 28 Brigade, just six miles short of Akhnur on line Garh-Fatwal-Devipur along Mawawali Khad. The operation was still in progress, when on 6 September India opened a new front across international border in Lahore and Kasur Sectors. This necessitated a change in plan. Operation GRAND SLAM, finally, lost its momentum, when part of 7 Division had to be pulled out for reinforcing other sectors. Western bank of Mawawali Khad was the farthest extent, upto which 7 Division reached. With Pakistani offensive coming to halt, Indian General Officer Commanding 10

Division tried to retake the lost ground. Two attacks were mounted on 7 and 10 September but both failed with significant losses.

Operations across International Border

19. Limited operations in Kashmir culminated into an all out war between India and Pakistan. Each side gradually jumped to next rung of escalation ladder. Neither side could achieve a decisive victory. It was a war of reactions, without considering consequences, resulting into disillusionment on either side.

20. Realizing a serious threat to lines of communication in Kashmir, India operationalized their plans against mainland Pakistan as war gamed during Operation ABLAZE. Since Indians had finalized an offensive plan against Lahore and Sialkot Sectors, they found it the best course to force on Pakistan a change in the operational centre of gravity.

Opposing Plans

21. **Indian Offensive Plan.** The outline plan was as follows:-

- a. **Main Effort.** Main effort was in Sialkot Sector with Indian 1 Corps. It was tasked cross Working Boundary between road Jammu-Sialkot and Basanter River (Degh Nadi) and establish a Bridge Head in the Bhagowal-Phillourah-Tharough cross-road area, with a view to advancing towards Marala-Ravi Link Canal, eventually securing line Dhallewali-Wuhilam-Mandhali.
- b. **Auxiliary Effort.** It was in Lahore Sector with Indian 11 Corps. It was tasked to advance on three axis that is, Amritsar-Lahore, Khalra Barki and Khem Karan-Kasur, and secure territory from opposite the village Rani inclusive to the junction of BRBL Canal with Depalpur Canal opposite Hussainiwala. Then, continue advance towards Lahore on all three axis. Simultaneously, eliminate Jassar Enclave and capture the bridge over River Ravi, if possible.
- c. **Fixation.** In Rajasthan and Suleimanke sectors Pakistani troops to be fixated.

22. **Pakistani Plan.** Strategically, Pakistan Armed Forces had no aggressive designs across international border. The concept was offensive-defence. This concept when applied at the Pakistan Army level implied that the onus of attacking first should be left to the

enemy in the beginning and then the initiative should be wrested with a quick, deep thrust through a counter stroke by the Army's Strike Force. General Headquarters had visualized that India did not have enough forces to undertake a major offensive and expected that war would be restricted to Kashmir. Accordingly, General Headquarters issued a directive on 31 August, which catered for two contingencies:-

- a. **Contingency 1 - War Restricted to Kashmir**
1 Corps was tasked to deploy 15 Division and take care of borders in Punjab, not confirming the date by which the defences were to be occupied.
- b. **Contingency 2- General War.** While remaining on the Defensive, 1 Corps was tasked to be prepared to launch two offensives one in Ravi Chenab Corridor and one in Ravi Beas Corridor. In the Sialkot Sector 1 Corps was to assume control of 7 Division on orders from General Headquarters, and launch a combined operation with 6 Armoured Division and 15 Division in general area Akhnur-Jammu-Samba-Kathua with a view to cutting the Indian line of communication. While in the Ravi Beas Corridor it was to be prepared to undertake an offensive towards Amritsar with 11 Division and 1 Armoured Division, in order to seal off the bridges over Beas, east of Amritsar.

Move and Assembly of Forces

23. **Indian Forces.** Indians had decided to start moving troops of XI and 1 Corps simultaneously to give Pakistan the least time for her reactive deployment. 1 Corps needed longer time to reach its operational area from the far away cantonments in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh. Depending on the distances involved, 1 Corps move was planned to concentrate in 10 days in Jammu-Samba area, however, the pressure of GRAND SLAM forced the Indians to complete the move of 1 Corps in 4 days, which they completed by 7 September. 11 Corps was located close to its operational area, therefore, it was able to complete its movement by 5 September. This delay in move and assembly forced Indian to delay the Main Effort in Sialkot Sector by 48 hours after the Auxiliary Effort against Lahore. 11 Division located at Ahmedabad, moved to area Gadra on 5/6 September 1965. Opposite Sulemankie, 67 Brigade completed its move to Fazilka by 5 September 1965.

24. **Pakistan Army.** Pakistani formations were not moved, fearing escalation and all out war. Even after the Indian Air Force struck on 1 September, the only orders given to the formations were

to disperse outside the cantonments with a bias towards the border as a precaution against further air raids. In this fog of indecisive atmosphere, a flash message from General Headquarters was initiated at 2230 hours on 4 September. It was also vague and asked for taking necessary defensive measures. When most of the Indian formations were moving west for attacking Pakistan, the Pakistani troops were moving east to occupy defences, which had yet to be dug.

Operations in Lahore-Kasur Sector

25. **Indian 11 Corps Plan (Operation Riddle).** The Corps had 3 Infantry/Mountain divisions and an Independent Armoured Brigade under its command. The tasks allotted to its formations:

- a. **7 Division**
 - (1) Advance along axis Bhikkiwind-Khalra-Barki and secure the BRBL east bank from Canal bridges west of Manhiala to the junction of UBDC at Bedian.
 - (2) Capture and hold Burki Bridge over the BRBL Canal.
- b. **5 Division**
 - (1) Advance along GT Road Axis (Amritsar-Lahore) and secure territory up to the east bank of BRBL Canal.
 - (2) Give priority to capture and holding of bridges over BRBL Canal on GT Road, Road Rani-BRBL Canal and at Jallo.
- c. **4 Mountain Division.** Advance along Khem Karan-Kasur axis and:
 - (1) Secure territory up to east of BRBL Canal.
 - (2) Destroy bridges over BRBL Canal on Road Khem Karan-Kasur.
 - (3) Occupy a defended sector to contain a possible Pakistani offensive along the axes Kasur-Khem Karan and Ganda Singhwala-Khem Karan.
- d. **Corps Reserve.** Corps reserve comprised 2 Independent Armoured Brigade located at Bandala and 96 Infantry Brigade, positioned at Tarn Taran.

26. **Pakistan.** In Lahore Sector, Pakistan had planned to hold the length of the BRBL Canal, with two infantry divisions deployed to face the Indian 11 Corps:-

- a. **10 Division.** It was responsible for Lahore from Maqbulpur to area south of Burki. Defences of 10 Division were based on BRBL Canal, with 114 Brigade on Lahore-Amritsar Axis and 103 Brigade on Khalra-Barki Axis. The third brigade constituted the striking force.
 - b. **11 Division.** This division was raised after May 1965. It was deployed south of 10 Division, responsible for area from Bedian to area south of Hussainiwala Head Works. 106 Brigade was deployed in area Bedian, 52 Brigade along Axes Khem Karan-Kasur and Ferozpur-Kasur. 21 Brigade was divisional reserve in Area Lulliani.
 - c. **105 Independent Brigade.** It was responsible for Sulaimanke-Fazilka area.
 - d. **Army Striking Force.** This force comprising 1 Armoured Division was located in general area Chhanga Manga. Its infantry component, 7 Division, had been committed in Chhamb Sector on 31 August 1965.
27. **Conduct - Operation Riddle.** The Indian offensive in Lahore-Kasur Sector commenced in the early hours of 6 September, with all the Indian formations attacking. They achieved surprise and secured initial objectives. Though Pakistani defences were initially shaken at places but reactions were sharp and timely. As a result those formations which had not consolidated their gains, were forced to fall back, in some cases straight to start point. The conduct of operations is summarised below:-
- a. **Lahore Sector**
 - (1) Leading elements of Indians 15 and 7 Divisions crossed Indo-Pak border at 0330 hours on 6 September, along Atari-Wagah and Khalra-Burki Axes respectively.
 - (2) On the Wagah front, protective detachments east of BRBL Canal imposed three hours delay and allowed Pakistani 10 Division to occupy their battle positions. First major attack against main defences at BRBL came at 0900 hours 6 September by Indian 38 Brigade, which was beaten back by 11 Baloch in Ichogil Area. Main attack, by 54 and 38 Indian Brigades, came against Batapur Bridge which were defeated by 3 Baloch supported

by squadron 23 Cavalry and Recce and Support Company ex-11 FF. Attacks were resumed by 15 Indian Division on 7 September but failed to make any headway across BRBL Canal. 10 Division recaptured lost area across BRBL Canal on 8 September through a counter attack. With 15 Division molested, Indians reinforced the Sector and by 14 September there were 5 infantry brigades and nearly 3 armour regiments strength opposite Pakistan's 10 Division. On 18 and 19 September, Indians again attacked Batapur-Jallo area with 50 Para Brigade and 38 Brigade but were beaten back. Another attack on 22 September captured Dograi east of BRBL. It was the nearest Indian attack that could reach Lahore.

- (3) On Burki front, Indian 7 Division advance was delayed on advance positions along Hudiana Drain till morning 7 September. Thereafter, 7 Division was delayed to contact main defences merely through artillery fire, patrols, raiding parties and screens. Barki was finally attacked on night 10/11 September, which was partially successful. Enemy was denied crossing BRBL Canal due to gallant action of Major Raja Aziz Bhatti Shaheed, Nishan-e-Haider of 17 Punjab and his men who fought on the eastern bank of the canal, long enough to allow demolition of the bridge and strengthening of the defences. On 15 September, 65 Indian Infantry Brigade captured another lightly held position of Manihiala which marked end of 7 Division's offensive.

b. **Kasur Sector**

- (1) 11 Division, having moved into defences a night earlier than 10 Division, was better prepared to receive Indian attack. However, the Division was deployed very close to the border and the very first attacks came on main defences. At 0530 hours 6 September, Indian 62 Mountain Brigade ex-4 Mountain

Division attacked on 7 Punjab positions astride road Khem Karan-Kasur. Attack was halted at Rohi Nullah by advance positions of 7 Punjab. Attacks attempted by 7 Indian Mountain Brigade in Pannuwan and Ballanwala were also repulsed by 7 Baloch.

- (2) These failing attacks sealed fate of the 4 Mountain Division's offensive, which withdrew to take up defences along line Cheema-Asal Uttar-Voltoha north of Khem Karan on 7 September in the wake of Pakistani offensive.

- c. **Jassar.** 115 Brigade was responsible for the defence of the area. Indian 29 Brigade launched a pre-emptive attack and captured the southern side of the bridge over River Ravi on 6 September and eliminated Jassar enclave. Though the Indians had captured the bridge as a protective measure, its capture generated a series of reactions. In order to prevent any threat to Narowal, 24 Brigade and 25 Cavalry responsible for the defence of Chobara and Phillourah were moved to Jassar and bridge was demolished prematurely on the orders of 15 Division on 7 September. However, having achieved their limited aim in this area, the Indians made no attempts of crossing Ravi and threatening Narowal.

Pakistan's Response

28. Following Indian Offensive in Lahore-Kasur Sector, Pakistan immediately decided to launch its counter stroke even before determining enemy's main and secondary efforts. With 7 Infantry Division detached for Operation GRAND SLAM, 11 Infantry Division was tasked to advance with 1 Armoured Division on Axis Kasur-Bhikkiwind-Amritsar with the following mission:-

- a. To seal off the Beas-Sutlej corridor by seizing the bridge over Beas River in order to cut Indian forces threatening Lahore.
- b. To thwart the enemy's advance through Lahore/Kasur Sector.

29. **Plan.** From the available accounts, 1 Armoured Division had been tasked to be prepared for launching an offensive in either of the two corridors that is Ravi Chenab and Ravi Bias. However, Armoured Division neither had any maps of Khem Karan Sector nor did they carry out reconnaissance or prior planning. The situation

was very fluid when the decision to launch 1 Armoured Division was taken. The final plan of employing the strike force was as follows:-

- a. **11 Infantry Division.** It was tasked to establish bridgehead over Rohi Nullah with the help of 5 Armoured Brigade.
 - b. **1 Armoured Division.** It was to breakout in two groups, with 3 Armoured Brigade astride Sabroan Branch and secure bridges, and second group of 4 Armoured Brigade to advance along Kasur Branch and cut-off GT Road at Jandiala Guru and secure bridges on River Beas.
30. **Indian Deployment**
- a. On night 6/7 September, when Pakistani forces were establishing the bridgehead, 4 Mountain Division was still involved in the offensive with its troops dispersed as under:-
 - (1) 9 Horse dispersed with a squadron each at Dholan, Khem Karan and Machhike.
 - (2) 4 Grenadiers opposite Pannuwan.
 - (3) 7 Grenadiers preparing to attack Ballanwala.
 - (4) 9 J&K Rifles opposite Rohi Nullah in area Custom Post.
 - (5) 18 Rajputana Rifles in defences south west of Khem Karan.
 - (6) 13 Dogra withdrawing to Valtoha from Mehdiapur area after it failed to attack on 7 Punjab positions on Rohi Nullah.
 - b. On 8 September, Indian 4 Mountain Division was deployed in a tight box defence by infantry reinforced by tanks and protected by mines as under:-
 - (1) 1/9 Gorkha and 18 Rajputana Rifles, with a troop of tanks each in front, defending Khem Karan-Amritsar and Khem Karan-Valtoha approaches respectively.
 - (2) 4 Grenadiers and 9 J&K Rifles less two companies in depth.
 - (3) 7 Grenadiers and 13 Dogra recovering from offensive operations and concentrating north of Valtoha.
 - (4) 9 Horse with an infantry company as covering troops in area south west of Khem Karan in anti tank role.

31. **Conduct**

- a. Bridgehead was established over Rohi Nullah along road Kasur-Khem Karan by 2 FF, under 11 Division, on night 6/7 September. The counter stroke did surprise the Indians in terms of time. After a series of major and minor problems in the move up of armour, 5 Armoured Brigade rolled into the bridge Head on 7 September and pushed back 9 J&K Rifles and 18 Rajputana Rifles, which fell back to new defensive positions in Asal Uttar Area.
- b. On the morning of 8 September, 5 Armoured Brigade advanced and captured Khem Karan by mid-day. By evening main defences were contacted and positions of 1/9 Gorkha were overrun. Outflanking manoeuvres reached Valtoha railway station and opposite Chima. However, infantry was not moved forward to occupy these positions and the tanks returned to Khem Karan during night 8/9 September.
- c. On night 8/9 September, 2 Indian Armoured Brigade was placed under 4 Mountain Division to stem Pakistani offensive. On Pakistani side, 4 Armoured Brigade, ex-1 Armoured Division was also inducted across Rohi Nullah by 0600 hours 9 September.
- d. On 9 September, 4 and 5 Armoured Brigades advanced on two axes and reached Duhai Kohlan and Valtoha Railway Station but again returned to their leaguers in Mastgarh and Khem Karan respectively during night.
- e. By 10 September, Indians had strengthened their defences, covering the flanks with armour of 2 Independent Brigade. They had taken a horse shoe position with about three tank regiments, one in 4 Mountain Division defence, other less a squadron in Valtoha area and the third and the most formidable in technical terms i.e. the 3rd Cavalry covering the western deep flank of the 4 Mountain Division.
- f. Advance of 5 Armoured Brigade on 10 September reached Asal Uttar but could not retain the positions and fell back under pressure. 4 Armour Brigade's 4 Cavalry advanced along road Khem Karan-Amritsar and ran into well laid out trap of Indian 3 Cavalry and almost all the tanks of 4 Cavalry were lost, either destroyed or captured.

- g. This brought an end to Pakistani offensive and defences of captured area were consolidated. Indians launched two counter attacks on 12 September and 21/22 September but failed to recapture Khem Karan.

Operations in Sialkot Sector

32. Opposing Plans

- a. **Indian Plan ‘Operation Nepal’.** 1 Corps, comprising 6 Mountain Division, 14 and 26 Divisions, was to break the crust of the Pakistani defences along the international border and 1 Armoured Division was then to debouch through the middle of above sector at first light to launch a deep thrust in the Pakistani defences. This operation was to be executed in two phases:-
 - (1) **Phase 1.** It envisaged three simultaneous attacks during Night 7/8 September, with a division each. 6 Mountain Division was to establish the main bridgehead by securing area between Charwa and Maharajke. 26 Infantry Division was to develop attack along Axis Jammu-Sialkot. The primary task of 26 Division was the defence of Jammu, protecting the right flank of 1 Corps operations and so containing the Pakistani troops in Sialkot that they could not interfere with the operations of 1 Corps. 14 Infantry Division was tasked to develop attack along Axis Rangor-Nakhnial-Zafarwal to secure left flank of the main.
 - (2) **Phase 2.** Breakout by 1 Armoured Division at first light to capture line Bhagowal-Phillaurah-Chawindah. Then push forward as deep as possible with the view to securing line Dhallewali-Wuhilam-Daska-Mandhali. 14 Division was to advance through Zafarwal and link up with 1 Armoured Division at Chawinda.
- b. **Pakistan.** Pakistan’s 1 Corps was tasked to defend Sialkot Sector from Jassar-Narowal to Sialkot and also to be prepared to launch a counter offensive

with its Strike Force. Deployment of 1 Corps was as under:-

- (1) **15 Division.** With four brigades, the Division was deployed from Marala Headwork to Maqbulpur as follow:
 - (a) **101 Brigade.** Astride main axis Jammu-Sialkot. With 20 Lancers under command, the brigade was to be prepared to destroy enemy in area Pasrur.
 - (b) **24 Brigade.** With 25 Cavalry, it was to defend area Chawinda-Charwa-Phillourah and be prepared to undertake offensive on Road Sialkot-Jammu.
 - (c) **115 Brigade.** Along with 33 TDU, it was to defend Narowal- Jassar sub-sector and on orders capture Dharam Enclave.
 - (d) **104 Brigade.** With 31 TDU, located west of Sialkot as divisional reserve. As Strike Force it was to eliminate any penetration on either flank.
- (2) **6 Armoured Division.** As reserve of 1 Corps, this division was concentrated around Daska and was tasked to be prepared to undertake offensive at an opportune moment.

33. **Conduct of Operations**

- a. On 6 September, 29 Indian Brigade attacked and captured the southern side of the Jassar Bridge. As already described, 24 Infantry Brigade along with 25 Cavalry less squadron had been displaced towards Jassar Enclave, which were rushed back to Chawinda, while still en-route.
- b. 26 Division and 6 Mountain Division attacked in Suchhetgarh and Charwa areas and overran the border positions during night 7/8 September. 14 Division's attack in Nakhnal area could not materialise due to its late arrival. 1 Armoured Division broke out on morning of 8 September on two axes towards Chawinda and Bhagowal. 1 Armoured Brigade's advance was checked north of Phillourah by a solitary squadron of 25 Cavalry,

which withdrew to line Kingra-Sabzpir, while 43 Lorried Brigade bogged down in the bridge head and could not break-out. 26 Division's exploits did not go beyond outposts short of main defences of 101 and 104 Brigades.

- c. By 10 September, Pakistani side had re-organised defences, holding Phillourah-Gadgore Box in strength with responsibility of defence between Aik Nullah and Degh Nadi going to 6 Armoured Division on 11 September. After repeated attacks by 1 Armoured Division, Phillourah was finally captured on 11 September. Pakistani Defences were now taken to check Indian Advance to Chawinda.
- d. Indians attacked Chawinda on 14/15 September with 1 Armoured brigade, 43 Lorried Brigade and 99 Mountain Brigade but the attack was repulsed by 24 Brigade and armour regiments of 6 Armoured Division, leaving Indians with little gains.
- e. Fresh attack was launched on 16 September by 1 Armoured Division and 6 Mountain Division. This again fell short of its objective and could only dent outer defences on western side of Chawinda at a great loss in men and material (India lost 25 tanks).
- f. Subsequent counter attacks pushed Indians across Sialkot-Chawinda railway line by 18 September. Indians launched their third and final attack on Chawinda on night 18/19 September by 6 Mountain Division, which resulted in almost annihilation of 2 mountain brigades, while achieving nothing. This was the last major action of 1965 war.

Operations in the South

34. **Sulaimanke-Fazilka Sector.** The Indian 67 Independent Infantry Brigade was thinly deployed over this vast area. Pakistani 105 Brigade launched an attack on Indian position and captured four villages namely Sadiqia, Jhangar, Noor Muhammad and Pakka and sufficient area to eliminate any threat to the head works. 105 Brigade kept up pressure on Indians and by 23 September it had captured 30 Indian villages and about 130 square miles of area.

35. **Sind-Rajasthan Sector.** The Indian Army Headquarters had planned to launch an attack on 8 September in conjunction with Operation NEPAL, with an ambitious plan of capturing Hyderabad by 17 September, with a force of one division. On 8

September Indians attacked and captured Ranger Post at Gadra. Instead of waiting for the Indians at Khokhrapar, the 51 Brigade launched an attack on 11 September and captured Monabao Railway Station. This was followed by capturing six Indian posts. These actions imposed caution on the Indians. 51 Brigade not only effectively fixed the Indian 11 Division in Rajasthan but also captured 1200 square miles of enemy territory in Desert Sector, as against 24 square miles captured by the Indians.

PART - III AIR OPERATIONS

Introduction

1. Air operations would be discussed in the following sequence:-

- a. Events prior to 1965 War.
- b. Force Structure of the Two Air Forces.
- c. PAF and IAF Strategy.
- d. PAF Concept of Operations.
- e. Conduct of Air Operations.
- f. Summary of Air Operations.
- g. Analysis of the Air Battle.
- h. Lessons.

Events Prior to 1965 War

2. We shall start with highlighting major events taking place with respect to PAF just prior to the 1965 war. The study will begin with the PAF reaction to Runn of Kutch and then onto the general war.

- a. **Operation Desert Hawk (4 April to 1 July, 1965).** In April, 1965, though PAF was not called upon to actively join the Pak Army operations, but Air Headquarters launched an operation code named Desert Hawk in which Mauripur air base was tasked to full alert status and Air Defence sensor at Badin was also put on round the clock surveillance for any eventuality that might emerge.
- b. **Review of Air War Plans.** In wake of changing geo-political situation, Air Headquarters started preparing for a conflict. War plans of 1962 were reviewed and revised **Air War Plans** were issued on 29 July, 1965 to all concerned.
- c. **Change of Command.** In July 1965 Air Marshal Nur Khan took over as C-in-C. He was a dynamic leader, Israeli C-in-C wrote about Air Marshal Nur Khan, “He was a formidable fellow, and I was glad that he was a Pakistani and not Egyptian”.
- d. **Operation Gibraltar (5 to 31 August, 1965).** Soon after taking over, Air Marshal Nur Khan met General Muhammad Musa and later GOC 12 Division by the time Operation Gibraltar had already been launched. He realized that although little participation by the PAF was envisaged in this operation, however, he immediately offered C-130 for logistic drops in Kashmir area. Through this he

ensured that PAF would remain abreast of the activity which, otherwise, had been planned in isolation from other services. Later on, PAF was tasked to drop supplies in Indian held Kashmir on 23 August.

- e. **PAF Gears up for Full Scale War.** Air Marshal Nur Khan was of the opinion that a conflict with India was inevitable. Therefore, he immediately started gearing-up PAF for a full scale war. Phase I and II was declared with actions as follows:-

- | | |
|----------------------|---|
| (1) Phase – 1 | Tactical Centre established at AHQ Peshawar |
| (18 August 1965) | Dispersal of operational aircrafts |
| | Operations room manning |
| (2) Phase – 2 | Activation of Air Operations HQ |
| (29 August 1965) | Highest state of alert was declared |

Force Structure of the Two Air Forces

3. A review of the force structure of both countries is as under:-
- a. **Fighter / Bombers.** PAF was relatively a smaller force vis-à-vis the Indian Air Force. Before the 1965 conflict, PAF had 149 fighter aircraft on its inventory, deployed in 9 squadrons to meet the challenge. On the other side IAF had total of 536 aircrafts, distributed in 30 different squadrons. This gave the IAF a numerical superiority of 3.6:1. Details are at Annexure A.
 - b. **PAF Bases.** Similarly, PAF lacked significantly in terms of infrastructure. PAF had only three major bases in the west that could handle combat aircrafts. These were Peshawar, Sargodha in the north and Mauripur in the south. However, emergency recovery airstrips were available at Risalpur, Chaklala, Risalewala and Bhagtanwala in the north and Drigh Road and Karachi Airport in the south. In East Pakistan, Dacca was available with an emergency recovery at Jessore, which lay very close to the Indian borders in the west.
 - c. **IAF Bases.** India on the other hand had seven airfields in the North. Two forward airfields at

Sirinagar, Pathankot and five in depth airfields at Adampur, Halwara, Chandigarh, Ambala and Agra. In the south, IAF had three bases at Jodhpur, Jamnagar and Bhuj. In the East, important IAF airfields were at Kalaikunda, Barrackpur, Bhagdogra, and Tezpur.

4. Thus, IAF had a much larger infrastructure available giving them flexibility of deployment and a much dispersed target. Approximately 50% of the airfields were such that IAF aircraft could make low level approach and surprise PAF installations. The state of Air Defence was as follow:

- a. **PAF AD.** PAF had two high level radars deployed at Badin and Sakesar, having a coverage of about 180 - 200 nm on medium & high level aircraft.
- b. Additionally, surveillance radars, type 14, were deployed at Rahawali and Thatta in West Pakistan. Two Type 14 were also deployed around Dacca in the East Pakistan.
- c. Mobile Operation Units were also deployed at a distance of 30, 60 and 100 miles in a layered concept around Sargodha, Mauripur and Dacca. All PAF Airfields were defended by Anti Aircraft Artillery (AAA).
- d. **IAF AD.** IAF on the other hand had five GCI radar and five British mobile surveillance Type 14 radars. These radars were located at Amritsar, Ambala, Porbunder in central sector, with type 14 deployed at Jammu, Ferozpur and Bhuj. The most important out of these radar was the one at Amritsar, as it was overlooking the ingress corridors from Pakistan. The remaining AD assets were deployed at the eastern front. Surface to Air Missile, comprising SAM-2 Russian origin were deployed at Ambala, Chandigarh and Delhi. All airfields and VPs were defended by AAA.

5. **Analysis of Forces and Resources.** The analyses of the force and resource comparison of both countries highlight the following points:-

- a. PAF enjoyed exclusive Air to Air IR missile capability on its 24 combat aircrafts.
- b. PAF aircrew was comparatively better trained due to more on-type experience and involvement with SEATO and CENTO.

- c. PAF had no low level radar coverage and was dependent on MOU reporting for early warning. Similarly IAF was dependent on similar means for low level warning, however, its inventory of HL radar was adequate.
- d. IAF enjoyed a 3.6:1 numerical superiority over PAF in 1965.
- e. Recently acquired IAF MiG-21s were not operational.
- f. IAF had mutually supportive airfields, as compared to PAF.
- g. For PAF centre of gravity was Sargodha airfield and Sakesar radar while for IAF the centre of gravity was Amritsar radar and airfields of Adampur, Halwara, Pathankot and Amritsar.

Opposing PAF and IAF Strategies

- 6. **PAF Air Strategy.** In case of war with India PAF strategy was to:-
 - a. Engage the enemy offensively to neutralize selected vital elements of IAF, in order to reduce the margin of numerical superiority.
 - b. Maintain security of own VPs.
 - c. Achieve favourable air situation and provide effective Offensive Air Support to surface forces.
- 7. **IAF Strategy.** The envisaged Indian air strategy was to:-
 - a. Exploit numerical superiority and neutralize or destroy the limited PAF air bases to render them ineffective.
 - b. Support their land operations.

PAF Concept of Operations

- 8. Keeping in view the envisaged IAF strategy, PAF concept of operations encompassed the following aspects:-
 - a. Attack all reachable IAF bases at the very outbreak of hostilities to inflict maximum damage to her, while still on ground.
 - b. Defend the identified PAF centre of gravity of Sargodha airfield and Sakesar radar.
 - c. Exploit technological advantage by employing GAR-8 capable aircraft for maximum attrition to IAF raiders.
 - d. Reduce the disparity in relative strength by enhancing sortie generation rate.
 - e. Designate certain number of aircrafts for Close Support to provide immediate response to ground forces.

- f. Continue night bombing raids throughout hostilities to keep the enemy's air bases under constant pressure.

Conduct of Air Operations

9. Conduct of air operations at various stages of war would be discussed in the succeeding paragraphs, starting with Operation Gibraltar.

10. **Air Support Operations in Operation Gibraltar.** As discussed earlier, when all supply routes for Gibraltar force were choked, PAF was forthcoming in assistance. C-in-C himself flew in the first drop sortie of C-130 and later PAF flew drop as well as recce sorties to see the progress of land operations.

11. **PAF Operations during Grand Slam (1-5 September 1965).** PAF remained committed in air defence primarily and limited close support missions limiting towards own side of the border. During this time, PAF flew 197 Air Defence sorties and 38 Close Support sorties and claimed 40 vehicles and 13 tanks and one APC. Whereas IAF struck our ground positions only twice, once on 1 September and again on 5 September with no significant results.

12. **First Encounter of 1965 War.** The first encounter of PAF with IAF was on 2 September, in Chamb sector close to sunet, by Squadron Leader Sarfraz Rafiqui and Flight Lieutenant Imtiaz Bhatti opening the PAF account by shooting down four Vampire aircraft. Thereafter Vampires and Ouragans were withdrawn from active combat duty reducing IAF inventory by 35%.

13. **Breakout of War.** Sequentially, the next PAF operations were against the Indian offensive at Lahore. The offensive in Lahore was launched at 0300 hours on 6 September by Indian Army. Surprisingly this was done without any cover from the IAF. This could be attributable to their obvious lack of joint planning.

14. 6 Sabres attacked the advancing formations on Lahore-Amritsar road, during which each pilot claimed two tanks. Having been hit badly by PAF, the Indian elements had to withdraw. Throughout the day 11 sorties were flown by PAF and they consistently pounded Indian armour without any challenge from IAF.

15. The biggest fear of PAF was its limited number of airfields. Thanks to lack of joint planning on the Indian side, no significant raid on the PAF airfields materialized. IAF conducted only a few interdiction missions on our railway stations during this time.

16. **PAF OCA Operations (6/7 September).** PAF marked the beginning of its offensive operations (OCAO) at dusk on 6 September. The same was also planned from East Pakistan the next morning. Following was the plan for 6 and 7 September:-

- a. F-86s from Peshawar were to strike Pathankot Airfield.
 - b. From Sargodha, F-86s were to strike Airfields of Adampur, Halwara and Amritsar radar. T-33 aircrafts were allotted less defended Ferozpur radar.
 - c. F-86 from Maripur were allotted Jamnagar airfield and Porbandar radar.
 - d. F-86 from Decca were to attack Kalaikunda airfield.
17. **Analysis.** Out of 53 sorties planned, only 34 could be achieved. IAF was caught by surprise. For the loss of one F-86 aircraft, 20 Indian aircrafts were destroyed. Without going into the tactical mission details, broad analyses of the offensive plan would be discussed:-
- a. The plan was brilliant, bold and offensive, requiring a high degree of coordination between the participating elements.
 - b. Final decision to launch the strikes was delayed by the AHQ, which left little time for pre-mission preparations.
 - c. Months of planning to achieve a coordinated TOT with a full compliment, on which the success largely depended, could not be achieved. About half of the planned sorties could be actually flown.
 - d. Strike against Pathankot was highly successful whereas strikes against other targets were partially successful.
 - e. Although PAF managed to destroy or damage a number of enemy aircrafts in air as well as on ground, it lost two of its valiant pilots: Squadron Leader Sarfraz Rafiqui and Flight Lieutenant Yunus Hasan.
18. Detailed reasons for partial success of PAF Offensive (on 6/7 Sep) are placed as Annexure C.
19. **SSG Raid on IAF Air Fields.** To reduce the numerical superiority of IAF; commando drops were planned to neutralize the threat through special operations. The SSG commandos were dropped on IAF airfields of Pathankot, Adampur and Halwara by C-130s, during the night of 6/7 September. 180 commandos in three groups of 60 men each were dropped. The operation failed due to poor intelligence and lack of coordination.
20. **PAF Night Operations.** The B-57 continued night attacks daily from 6 to 22 September on selective IAF airfields amongst Jhamnagar, Pathankot, Halwara, Adampur, Srinagar, Jammu, Jodhpur and Sirsa.

21. The bomber fleet flew a total of 170 strike missions against IAF airfields, with a loss of only two aircraft. Apart from striking the airfields the bombers also targeted railway stations, bridges, Amritsar radar and even carried out night close air support.

22. **Close Support Operations.** Despite poor coordination procedures between air contact team and the pilots, poor quality of communication equipment and in the absence of experienced PAF liaison officers, PAF was able to conduct ground support operations quite effectively.

23. PAF flew 500 close support missions mostly with Sabres and did not lose a single aircraft. T-33 and T-6 G Harvard also participated in close support in last days of war. Till 22 September, PAF was credited with:

- a. 149 Tanks destroyed, 56 damaged.
- b. 666 Vehicles destroyed, 60 damaged.
- c. 62 Guns of all size destroyed, 19 damaged.

24. **C-130 Employment in Support and Offensive Role** Having achieved local air superiority, C-130 was also employed in the tactical night bombing role on troop concentration, bridges and artillery. The first target attacked was Kathua Bridge on the 12 night. Upto 22 September night it flew another 13 missions against enemy ground position in Lahore and Sialkot sectors, dropping 140 tons of bombs.

25. The effectiveness of PAF close support missions was acknowledged by the Indians also. Lieutenant General Harbaksh Singh, Commander Western Command, of Indian Army wrote about PAF in his book War Dispatches, Indo-Pak Conflict, "Pak Air Force rendered close air support throughout the period of hostilities. In its interdiction role during the opening phase of the operations, especially in the Amritsar Sector, it caused a serious setback to our offensive action. Their longer duration of stay in the battle area enabled them to carry out several passes which tended to have a demoralizing effect on some troops."

26. Having gone through the offensive Operations of PAF, we would now briefly touch upon PAF Defensive operations.

27. **Defensive Operations (DCA).** PAF undertook extensive DCA effort to defend its centre of gravity. Primarily CAPs were flown for VPs and to protect the land forces from enemy air intervention. After the encounter of 6/7 September, the IAF, almost gave up its OCA and even became reluctant to engage.

28. **DCA Efficacy.** Sabres flew total of 950 air defence sorties. In air engagements they shot 7 and damaged one. F104s flew 246 air defence sorties and destroyed Two aircraft by day and Two at night for the loss of one.

Support to Navy

29. Only fourteen reconnaissance missions were flown in support of the Navy and no request arose as the Indian Navy stayed in the ports with their aircraft carrier Vikrant undergoing refit. The aim of the recce missions was to observe for possible appearance of Vikrant.

30. **Air Campaign East Pakistan.** The only squadron in East Pakistan surprised IAF by a staggered strike on Kalaikunda on 7 September, destroying 10 aircrafts on ground. This feat earned the Squadron nickname of “Tail Choppers”. The second strike was intercepted and PAF lost one F-86. Dacca squadron attacked Baghdogra on 10 and destroyed 4 aircrafts on ground.

31. The PAF eastern OCA operations were terminated on 10th September, on the request of GOC Dacca, so that eastern front hostilities should not be escalated unnecessarily.

IAF Response

32. The realistic analysis would not be possible without critically analysing the response of IAF against PAF’s offensive air strategy. The IAF started with midnight raids on 6/7 September at Sargodha, Rawalpindi and Mauripur with 17 Canberra but with no success.

33. **IAF Raid against Sargodha.** Next morning IAF attacked Sargodha in four waves as follows:-

IAF RAID	TARGET	DAMAGE	REMARKS
6 Mysteres	Sargodha Air Field	Nil	PAF shot 3 Mysteres Lost one F-104, debris
6 Hunters	Sargodha Air Field	Nil	MM Alam shot five aircrafts
4 Mysteres	Sargodha Air Field	Partial	one F-86 lost on ground
3 Mysteres	Sargodha Air Field	Nil	IAF lost two aircrafts

In one day IAF lost 11 aircrafts out of 19 raiders, in an attempt to neutralize the Airforce.

PAF lost one aircraft on ground and one in air as it flew through debris.

34. **The Decisive Days 6/7 September 1965.** The events of 6 and 7 September were the most crucial and decisive part of the 1965 air war. By the end of these two days, PAF had achieved a

considerable degree of Air Superiority, by destroying 33 IAF aircrafts and could now afford to support the land war with success.

Summary of Air Operations

35. **Air Effort Generation in 1965.** PAF combat aircraft flew 2286 sorties, as compared to IAF's 3937 sorties, which is almost double of the PAF effort generation. PAF flew 57% AD, 13% OCA, 26% OAS and 4% others missions. To further simplify, IAF flew 700 sorties in CS as compared to PAF, which flew 500. IAF OCA effort was mostly in night with 55% of effort directed towards such missions.

36. **Distribution of Air Effort**

Mission Type	Sorties Flown	% of Total Effort
CAO	1605	70% (57% AD & 13% OCA)
CS / Int	591	26%
Naval Support+ Recce	62+14	3.4%
C-130	14	0.6%
Total	2286	

37. **War Attrition.** As per the official figures, PAF lost 16 aircraft with 12 aircrew fatalities, while IAF lost 49 aircrafts with 31 aircrew fatalities under flashed categories. Translating it to attrition rate with sorties flown 2286 and 3937 attrition rate would be:-

- a. IAF : 1.24%
- b. PAF : 0.7%

38. That means IAF suffered 50% more attrition as compared to PAF, which indeed was a great achievement by a force one third the size of the enemy. It is pertinent to analyse that how did it happen.

39. **Analysis of Air Battle.** Analyzing the air operations following conclusions could be drawn:-

- a. PAF aggressive posture seized IAF initiative and forced it to defensive, despite the numerical superiority.
- b. Experience, training and good maintenance standards made significant contributions to PAF air operations.
- c. Visionary and bold leadership of C-in-C, Sarfraz Rafique and MM Alam) and others exemplary value displayed by lifted the spirits, boosted morale of the troops and greatly influenced the outcome of war.
- d. Employment of C-130 in offensive role, using T-33 and Harvards for CS are classic examples of innovation and optimum utilization of resources.

- e. Limited operating bases remained a serious source of concern for PAF. 70% assets were deployed at Sargodha and Peshawar. It was only good fortune and lack of determination on the part of Indians that Sargodha and Peshawar continued to escape disaster
 - f. Absence of precise information about some targets culminated in some mission failures.
 - g. Inadequate preparation and lack of contingency planning led to partial success in some missions.
 - h. Inter- service co-ordination for synergetic effects remained wanting.
 - i. PAF's cooperation and support was instrumental in not only providing air cover to own offensive but also in blunting Indian land offensive.
40. **Lessons.** Important lessons which can be derived out of the Air War of 1965 are as follows:-
- a. Wars cannot be planned by one service in isolation. Joint planning and combined strategy, with synergetic effects, would be crucial for winning a war.
 - b. Air Power's inherent characteristics can be best exploited by its offensive employment.
 - c. Quality training, technological edge and high maintenance standards can offset the numerical advantage of adversary.
 - d. Precise intelligence and good targeting strategy are essential for increasing success rate and enhancing own survivability.
 - e. Infrastructure remains essential for providing flexibility and efficient operations.
 - f. Conduct of war without air power can be suicidal. Its increasingly dominant role in modern warfare has to be recognized in the formulation of military strategy.

Annex ‘A’ To Part III

FIGHTER / BOMBERS

Pakistan Air Force	
Type	Strength
F-86	100 (22 equipped with GAR-8 missiles)
F-104	12 (All capable of GAR-8)
B-57	25 (3 for Recce & ELINT)
T-33	12 (5 fitted with recce cameras)
Total 149 distributed in 09 Squadrons.	

Indian Air Force			
Type	Strength	Type	Strength
Mig-21	10	Ouragans	56
Hunter	118	Vampire	132
Gnat	80	Canberra	60 (07 Recce)
Mystere	80		
Total 536 distributed in 27 Fighter & 3 Bomber Squadrons			

Annex ‘B’ To Part III

PAF OCA Operations (6/7 September)

Base	Sorties Planned	TARGET	TOT
Peshawar	08 x F-86	Pathankot Airfield	1705
Sargodha	08 x F-86	Adampur Airfield	“
	08 x F-86	Halwara Airfield	“
	06 x F-86	Amristar Radar	“
	01 x RB-57		
	04 x T-33	Ferozpur Radar	“
Mauripur	08 x F-86	Jamnagar Airfield	“
	04 x T-33	Probunder Radar	“
Decca	04 x F-86	Kalaikunda Airfield	Dawn 7 th Sep
	04 x F-86	Same	2 nd Wave

Annex 'C' To Part III

**REASONS FOR PARTIAL SUCCESS OF PAF OFFENSIVE
(6/7 SEPTEMBER)**

1. PAF raid plan was based on simultaneous TOT, therefore, it required a very high degree of co-ordination for implementation. Each IAF airfield was to be hit by a strike comprising eight Sabers. The target airfields included Pathankot, Adampur, Halwara, Jamnagar and Kalaikunda. Each F-86s formation was to destroy enemy aircrafts, while they were on ground.
2. The Plan required an eight hours warning time to field commanders. However, delays in coordination, un-serviceability, battle damage and close support requirements reduced the available force for the mission. Resultantly, the strike plan could not materialize.

Airfield-wise Details

3. **Pathankot.** The strike at Pathankot caught IAF unaware. Eight F-86 aircrafts struck the airfield using rockets and guns. 2 Mig-21 and 08 Mystere aircraft were destroyed on ground.
4. **Adampur.** The strike for Adampur in addition to being late comprised only three aircrafts instead of the planned eight. This raid was intercepted en-route to target, as Pathankot strike had warned the enemy. The strike formation was engaged by IAF CAPs and was able to destroy two hunters, while damaging three others, but the airfield was not touched.
5. **Halwara.** The strike for Halwara was also late and comprised three aircrafts instead of eight. It reached the target but failed to pick up the airfield due to fading light at dusk. IAF CAPs engaged the strike. The Sabres were outnumbered but shot two Hunters and lost two F-86s flown by Squadron Leader Rafiqui and Flight Lieutenant Younus Hasan. The mission could not accomplish its objectives.
6. **Jamnagar.** Jamnagar could not be attacked due to insufficient time available for aircrafts preparation. However, on same night, six B-57 aircrafts attacked Jamnagar in two waves of three aircrafts each. The attack was successful and the strike returned unopposed.
7. **Radars.** The remaining strikes were planned on the three radars at Porbundur, Ferozpur and Amritsar. But none was

successful as either they could not locate the radar sites or RB-57 homing equipment went unserviceable enroute to target.

PART - IV NAVAL OPERATIONS

Introduction

1. It is a general perception that the navies of both India and Pakistan played no prominent role in the war of 1965. This is true in terms of what the actual outcome of the war itself was. The question comes then why to discuss naval aspect of the 1965 war? The answer is because it made a lasting impact on wider canvass of the regional security dynamics. Indian sources claim that it was not their intention to get into a naval conflict with Pakistan, order to restrict the war to a land-based conflict. However, the limited engagement at sea gave a clear message to the Indian navy that they are not alone in the region and further 'reinforced' their belief about importance of Navy in their pursuit of the regional and global power.
2. This part will unfold as under:-
 - a. Situation at sea.
 - b. Strategic options open to both the sides and strategies adopted.
 - c. Conduct.
 - d. Analysis of the mistakes.
 - e. After thoughts.

The Situation at Sea

3. **India.** In July 1965, a large portion of the Indian Navy was at Madras carrying out exercises with the British submarine Astute and the venue shifted to Vishakhapatnam in August 1965. On conclusion of these exercises, the cruiser Mysore and the frigates Brahmaputra and Beas proceeded to Calcutta. Rear Admiral Samson, the Flag Officer Commanding Indian Fleet, was on board to Mysore at this time. Once in Calcutta, Rear Admiral Samson and his staff suddenly proceeded by train to Bombay. The cruiser Mysore and frigates also left Calcutta for Cochin.
4. **Pakistan.** From the time of the Runn of Kutch operations in March 1965, for the next four to five months the PN ships went to sea frequently and carried out intensive maneuvers. Changes of formation from surface to anti-aircraft disposition were carried out, while long periods were spent patrolling off Karachi. Exercises continued through the monsoons and in August all leave was stopped in the fleet and preparations were made for possible hostilities.
5. **Analysis/Comments.** In maritime terms it was "*Business-as-usual*". Nevertheless, both did participate in 1965 war. This may be odd for a few of my colleagues sitting in this hall but this is what the navies are. As the saying goes, that a man-of-war can change its

posture from a ‘cock tail party’ to a ‘gun roaring monster’ within a few hours. Does this sound familiar when we talk of ‘Cold Start Strategy’ in 21 Century? Remember we are talking about that an event happened about 45 years back.

Strategic Options Open to both the Sides and Strategies Adopted

6. Before discussing the strategic options open to both the sides and strategies adopted, it will be apt to see the comparison of naval forces in September 1965, which was as under:-

Serial	Platforms	Pakistan	India
a.	Cruisers	1	3
b.	Destroyers/Frigates	7	19
c.	Submarine	1	Nil
d.	Air Arm	Nil	Yes (Surveillance)

7. It is evident from the table that except in the domain of subsurface, the Indian Navy was thrice the size of Pakistan, however, we will see that this difference of the submarine made the final impact. Based on the assets available, the strategic options available to both the belligerents were:-

	Pakistan Navy	Indian Navy
a.	Fleet in Being	Fleet in Being
b.	Power projection (limited)	Power projection

8. Analyzing the combat power and strategic options available, it was logical to adopt a policy of “*Fleet in being*” by the Pakistan Navy and “*Power projection*” by the Indian Navy. However, that was not the case. Pakistan opted for *Power Projection* and India *Fleet in being*. The questions come why and how?

9. **Analysis/Comments.** In case of Pakistan, it knew that major Indian naval surface combatants are at Bombay and it could be trapped inside the harbour through PNS/M Ghazi. Even if, Indian Navy try to contest this submarine it will have to deploy extensive ASW efforts, thereby, depleting its resources and relegating the option of power projection, which generally require more resources. Therefore, PN decided to adopt the option of Power Projection by pinning down the Indian fleet through submarine and attacking the coastal installations through her surface fleet, if so desired. On the other hand, Indian Navy knew, as predicted by the Pakistan Navy, that it would not be able to contest effectively the Pakistani submarine, hence, it would be prudent to adopt the strategy of *Fleet in being* and contest the Pakistani Fleet at an opportune time. The problem was also compounded from the fact

that the Indian Navy was caught on the wrong foot at the commencement of hostilities; the carrier borne strike aircraft were at Cochin towards the end of August, subsequently, these were moved to Bombay and to Jamnagar, which was rather late. Moreover, to ensure a safe passage for the surface fleet time was not available to conduct an effective ASW sanitization.

Conduct

10. The message that the Indians had attacked across the international frontiers in the Lahore area was received at 0630 on 6 September. Orders were given to our naval forces to proceed to their war stations, thereafter.

11. **Surface Operation.** When we talk of the surface operations, at that time surface fleet was preparing to leave harbour at 0800 hours for the weekly exercise programme but not for the war. However, in line with the enduring feature of a naval unit, they were prepared having embarked with fuel, stores and ammunition as a standard package. The ships in fact slipped before 0800 hours and left harbour, thereafter, they remained at sea almost continuously till end of the war. During the afternoon of 7 September, while the ships were on patrol, the following signal was sent from Naval Headquarters:-

'Task group comprising Babur. Khaibar. Badr. Jahangir. Alamgir. Shahjahan and Tippu Sultan is to be in position 293 degree - 120 miles from Dwarka Light House by 071800 SEP with maximum power available. Task group thereafter to carryout bombardment of Dwarka about midnight using 50 rounds per ship. Force is to retire from bombardment area by 0800 and return to present patrol arc at full speed. One or two enemy frigates may be expected to encounter in the area in addition to enemy air threat.'

12. In accordance with the tasking signal, around mid night the bombardment was ordered. It took just four minutes to complete the bombardment. On completion of bombardment, the task Group arrived at the hundred-mile patrol arc at 0635 on 8 September, having completed its mission. After the Dwarka operation the flotilla remained patrolling along the 100 mile arc changing to anti-aircraft dispositions at dusk and dawn and very little happened thereafter.

13. **Analysis/Comments.** As mentioned earlier, naval units by design are self-contained units with prolonged endurance. They are expected to radiate not only the diplomatic aspect but also the military aspects, at a very short notice. This dual requirement does

not give them any room for any last minute preparation. For them, it has always been and will remain a Cold Start Strategy, as Indians are calling it now. In this case also we saw that ships were told at the very last minute when they were about to leave harbour for a routine peacetime exercise. In fact, they remained at sea throughout the war without any fallback for the harbour with just a change of posture from peacetime mind set to the wartime mind set.

14. **Subsurface Operations.** The submarine Ghazi was deployed off Bombay. On 22 September 1965 PNS Ghazi gained contacts which were persistent and gaining strength. The submarine altered course to intercept. The target was an anti aircraft frigate. At 1912 four bow tubes were fired. The periscope was kept up for all four torpedoes to ensure accuracy. After one minute and thirty seconds the first torpedo was heard to hit, followed by five seconds later by another hit. At about 1917 hours sonar reported two patterns of squids being fired. Five minutes later sonar reported one more pattern of squid firing. However, the submarine managed to escape unscratched and returned to Karachi on 23 September.

15. **Analysis/Comments.** The submarine sailed for her deployment on 2 September. It may be mentioned that submarine deployment is critical in any war. It is a dilemma for any maritime commander to decide when to sail the subsurface units. If she sails early she may lose the endurance and if she sails late then she loses the effectiveness. During 1965 war, sailing of the submarine was ideal. It takes three days to reach Bombay from Karachi and the submarine was there on 5 September, just enough to settle down before the start of the war and we saw the results.

Analysis of the Mistakes

16. Detailed analysis of the 1965 war (naval aspect) in a highly compressed time is not possible. Therefore, we will only analyze a few important aspects whose manifestation or otherwise might have altered the outcome.

17. **Air-Maritime Operation.** There was no or very little Inter services cooperation. On the same note, there was no or very little concept of Air – Maritime operations, at that time, in this part of the world. Navy and Air Force generally operated as separate entities. Indian Navy while opting to adopt the strategy of *Fleet in Being* failed to realize the importance and use of the Indian Air element for attacking PN surface units during Dwarka operation, which were right at its door steps. The ships were at 5 miles, an air attack right at the door of the Indian would have paid them the dividends. One fails to understand why Indian Navy did not utilize the opportunity? A few of the possible reasons could be low level of inter-services cooperation, pressing requirements in northern

sectors and lack of appreciation of use of air power against maritime naval targets. Had this not been the case they could have played havoc with PN Surface Fleet.

18. **Under Utilization of the Sea Based Air Arm.** As indicated earlier, at the start of the war Indian Navy was probably caught on the wrong foot. The Aircraft Carrier is essentially an offensive element, however, it was in harbour and the carrier based air arm at Cochin. This led to the under utilization of the sea based air element at a crucial time. The start of the war was not sudden rather the war clouds were there. PN sailed the submarine in anticipation. The same could have been visualized by the Indian side and could have sailed the carrier out of the harbour ahead of the time, where the air arm could join. Had this important element been out at sea, the outcome might have been different. It was a very defensive strategy. With Aircraft Carrier out at sea, it would have not been possible to send the PN Surface fleet to attack Dwarka.

19. **Non Availability of Sub-surface Capability.** Absence of submarine with Indian Navy played a decisive role. With the presence of a sole submarine with PN, Indian Navy could not have freedom of action. Indian Navy made the mistake of not acquiring submarine, which had already proved efficacy for war at sea.

After Thoughts

20. People say that the war of 1965 became a turning point in the history of the Pakistan Navy, as it outmanoeuvred a navy three times its size. However, one would argue that the 1965 war proved a larger turning point in the history of the Indian Navy. They were quick to learn the critical lessons in terms of significance of a strong surface fleet capable of contesting a blockade, backed by submarine and integrated air power. Soon after the war, Indian Navy placed hectic efforts in strengthening its surface fleet capable of contesting blockade, acquisition of the submarine and integration of Land and sea based air power. On the other side, PN though further strengthened the subsurface element (which once more proved its efficacy in 1971) but did little on the surface and air elements. Unfortunately, this lack of appreciation is still there and this might prove to be the deciding factor in any future conflict.

PART- V

ANALYSIS AND LESSONS LEARNT

General

1. Lieutenant General Mahmud Ahmed writes in his book **History of Indo Pak War-1965**, *“The 1965 War presented both adversaries with opportunities of strategic dimension which were neglected and lost by both sides. This was for the reason that military thinking in the Sub-Continent during the Sixties had not matured above the minor tactical plane. Therefore, the outcome during this war was neither spectacular nor decisive”*. The analysis of the war has essentially been conducted from open sources and a few unpublished historical compilations and has been carried out in following sequence:-

- a. Political and Military Aims.
 - b. Higher Direction of War.
 - c. Operational Strategy.
 - d. Miscellaneous aspects.
 - e. Lessons learnt.
2. **Political Aims.** The political aims of the adversaries were as follow:
- a. **Pakistan.** The political objective of Operation Gibraltar was to defreeze the Kashmir issue and force India for a meaningful dialogue on Kashmir. Pakistan not only failed to achieve her political objective but moved away from forcing a resolution of the issue as Tashkent Declaration hardly mentions Kashmir. Our leadership also failed to read the prevalent environment and developed a faulty perception about Kashmir on three accounts:-
 - (1) General upheaval in Kashmir due to loss of holy relic from HazratBal was termed as spontaneous referendum against India by President Ayub Khan.
 - (2) It was assumed that Muslim population in Kashmir was ready for general revolt against India and the conditions were ripe for insurgency in Indian Held Kashmir.
 - (3) It was also perceived that India would go on defensive to fight insurgency and the conflict would remain limited to Kashmir.
 - b. **India.** Indian political aim was to maintain status quo in Kashmir at all costs. They pursued this aim to

the limit of going for an all out war with Pakistan. As a result of war, India not only succeeded in maintaining status quo in Kashmir but they were able to put the Kashmir issue on the back burner for an indefinite period of time.

3. **Military Aims.** The military aims of the adversaries were the following:
 - a. **Pakistan.** Since Pakistan did not envisage an all out war, therefore, there was no wholesome war aim as such. Operation Gibraltar was initiated with the limited aim of defreezing Kashmir issue and creating conditions conducive for its resolution. This resolution was primarily to be sought through a political dialogue possibly with international mediation. As such, Pakistan launched different operations with specific limited aims as follow:
 - (1) **Operation Gibraltar.** The aim was to defreeze Kashmir issue, by inciting insurgency in IHK, to pressurize India for resolution of Kashmir issue, however, the aim could not be achieved.
 - (2) **Operation Grand Slam.** The aim was to relieve pressure against 12 Division, while keeping the hostilities limited to Kashmir. Pakistan was successful in relieving the pressure against 12 Division, but it resulted in an all out war.
 - (3) **All Out War.** The aim was to defend territorial integrity of Pakistan, while ensuring maximum destruction of the enemy. The aim was partially achieved.
 - b. **India**
 - (1) Indian war aim was threefold; to maintain status quo in Kashmir, to capture maximum territory of Pakistan to be at a better bargaining position at the end of war and to degrade Pakistan's armed forces. Major General (Retd) Shaukat Raza in his book **The Pakistan Army – War 1965** writes, "As early as 1950 Indian Prime Minister Jawahar Lal Nehru had warned that an attack on Kashmir would mean a general war, and if war was imposed on India it

- would be fought as far as possible on Pakistani soil”.*
- (2) India achieved partially her military aims in Kashmir, including capture of Batori Bulge, an objective of strategic importance, whereas, she failed to capture any such important objective elsewhere in Pakistan. Destruction of Pakistan armed forces was hardly achieved.

Higher Direction of War

- a. **Pakistan.** Air Marshall Asghar Khan in his book **The First Round** writes, *“In Rawalpindi, the control and direction of the war was woefully lacking”*. The higher direction of war at the national and inter-service level in 1965 was not institutionalised and the two main policy making bodies, that is, Defence Committee of the Cabinet (DCC) and Joint Staffs’ Committee were existing on papers without any input towards laying down defence policy parameters and issuing operational directive for war respectively. The lack of checks and balances, had the following ill effects:-

- (1) **Absence of Tri-Services Co-ordination**
In the absence of a Joint Services Headquarters, the inter services co-ordination was generally lacking. This resulted into isolated and self-centred decisions by the respective services.
- (2) **Organisational Structure of Pakistan Army.** Approved raising of one Corps Headquarters and two Divisional Headquarters materialized in raising of just one Divisional Headquarters by the start of war. As General Attiq Ur Rehman opines on the absence of a corps headquarters in RBC in his book **‘Our Defence Cause’**, *“The great pity here was that the right headquarters, a corps headquarters, had been sanctioned by Government but was not established by General Headquarters – perhaps because its use was not fully understood, or may be simply because the one in being was a headache anyway”*.
- (3) **Pakistan Air Force.** Pakistan Air Force was brought to operational readiness by its

Commander-in-Chief at his own, as there were no clear orders from the Government till outbreak of the hostilities.

- (4) **Pakistan Navy.** Coordination with the Navy is evident from the views of Lieutenant General (Retd) Gul Hassan, given in his book **Memoirs** who was then, the Director Military Operation at GHQ. He says, “*As far as co-operation with the Navy was concerned, we were aware that we had such a service in the country and it was located somewhere near Karachi. Such a high level of enlightenment ended our knowledge of Pakistan Navy*”. Even the successful naval assault on Dwarka was purely a naval affair. Commander-in-Chief Army was informed about it only after its successful completion.

b. **India**

- (1) The situation on the Indian side also had their share of problems, primarily due to lack of inter-services harmony.
- (2) The offensive across international border did not cater for uncommitted strategic reserve.
- (3) Like Pakistan the Indian Air Force fought its own air war.
- (4) Indian Naval contribution was also insignificant.

Operational Strategy

4. **Concept of Operations.** Concept of operations of the adversaries as follow:

- a. **Pakistan.** Our concept of operation was well conceived. In Kashmir zone, it envisaged committing, not only the Indian forces in IHK through Operation Gibraltar and paralyzing the state, but also to close the lid through Operation Grand Slam by severing their vital line of communication at Akhnur. In Punjab, it aimed at undertaking an offensive in Ravi – Sutlej corridor to sever their line of communication in area East of Amritsar, in case the conflict spills across the international border. Though our concept of operation met the requirements of tenets of operational strategy, however, it could not achieve decisive results since we failed to knit our Kashmir

and Punjab operations into a single concept of operation and also the fact that it failed at execution stage.

- b. **India.** Indian plan was superior in conception and had chances of success. It aimed at first to threaten and capture our strategic zone and then deliver the hammer to destroy our armour. Their design was to force us to disperse our defensive effort through their combination of thrusts, thereby, causing imbalance in our system of forces. The selection of objectives in various sectors was appropriate. The main weakness lay in the execution. Indian main effort in the RCC never had the resources and the potential to come so deep. The Indians had conceived the War in its totality and accordingly formulated their concept of operations. They had carried out deliberations on their plans through conduct of war games code named Operation Ablaze.
- 5. **Superiority of Strategic Orientation.** Availability of suitable strategic objectives in the proximity and operating on interior lines, coupled with offensive plans and availability of formations in the field, gave Pakistan a superiority of strategic orientation. Pakistan, however, could not exploit this advantage fully due to faulty perceptions about enemy reactions.
- 7. **Strategic Postures.** The Indians in overall scenario were on offensive both strategically and tactically. Pakistan adopted a strategically defensive and tactically offensive posture.
- 8. **Strategic Objectives**
 - a. **Pakistan.** Pakistan selected following spatial objectives:-
 - (1) **Grand Slam.** Operation Gran Slam was launched in an existing vacuum towards Akhnur, which was a correctly chosen and sensitive objective. Though the Akhnur Bridge was not captured, yet it did relieve the pressure on 12 Division, thereby, achieving at least part of its aim.
 - (2) **Strike Force.** The direction and objective were correct and did surprise the enemy. Though we remained short of the objective, both the operations managed to surprise the Indians.
 - b. **India.** Indian strategy was both space and force oriented:-

- (1) **Kashmir.** India selected Jura and Bedori Bulges as tactical objectives and was able to capture these, causing serious blows to Operation Gibraltar. Any further exploitation could have had strategic effects on our side.
- (2) **Operation Riddle.** Threatening Lahore, a city of psycho-social significance was a correct decision. Their offensive forced recoil on operation Grand Slam.
- (3) **Operation Nepal.** Indians did choose a correct strategic direction and objective of threatening Sialkot and GT Road. Initial problems of delayed assembly and, thereafter, faulty execution were the causes of Indian failure.
- (4) Degradation of Pakistani Armed Forces was a correct objective. They, however, failed to achieve it.

9. **Operational Cycle**

a. **Pakistan**

- (1) Operation Grand Slam was abandoned after Phase-1 and it could not be brought to its logical end to achieve desired results due to Indian attack across the international borders.
- (2) Pakistan had an excellent opportunity to complete defensive operational cycle after blunting Indian Main and Auxiliary Efforts in RCC and RBC. Pakistan did launch a counter stroke in RBC but it petered out without achieving desired effects.
- (3) 1 Corps could not complete a classical defensive operational cycle in the RCC as 6 Armoured Division was employed on a defensive role instead of counter attacking the Indian base of operation.

- b. **India.** Indian Main Effort in RCC could only make some tactical gains, creating some strategic reactions from Pakistan, however, their Auxiliary Effort in RBC petered out in Forward Defended Localities. Both efforts did not go beyond break in battle in their offensive and, therefore, the operational cycle remained incomplete.

10. **Lines of Operations**

- a. Overall Indians were on interior lines (East and West Pakistan) and Pakistan was on exterior lines.
 - b. Due to the confinement of operations to Western Theatre only, Pakistan enjoyed the advantage of operating on interior lines. Pakistan exploited this advantage during initial assembly, and later by moving 1 Armoured Division into RCC in less than 48 hours.
 - c. Indians operating on exterior lines did have chance of a double envelopment of Shakar Garh salient, which they did not exploit.
 - d. Initial assembly of Indians in RCC across Ravi was difficult and vulnerable to detection and interdiction. Pakistan did not try to gain any advantage from this situation.
11. **Centre of Gravity**
- a. **Pakistan.** As a nation, Pakistan's centre of gravity was its armed forces and within armed forces, these were the armoured divisions. Pakistan's main cities of Lahore and Sialkot were of great psycho-social importance and had their strong linkage with nation's morale. Their retention was of critical importance. The Indians went wrong in their identification of our centre of gravity at strategic level, which lay in the union of our two armoured divisions. The core of the Indian plan should have been to keep our 1 Armoured Division and 6 Armoured Division separated. Similarly, they also went wrong in their assessment of centre of gravity in the tactical battle, while launching their main effort. According to them it lay in Chawinda and not 6 Armoured Division.
 - b. **India.** Her centre of gravity was the main cities of Akhnur, Jammu and Amritsar. In addition to being hubs of communication network in the area, these also had great psycho-social importance. In addition to these, bridges over River Beas had their critical importance for all forces operating in RBC.
12. **Balance.** Balance basically relates to the availability of reserves at all levels, especially the strategic reserves to redress the imbalance. Though in none of the cases a state of critical imbalance was reached, however, at many occasions both the adversaries were unbalanced.

a. **Pakistan**

- (1) Initial distribution of troops and placing of reserves was correctly done.
- (2) Operation Gibraltar was launched by thinning out troops from Kashmir. The imbalance so created was exploited by Indians through capture of Kargil Heights and Hajipir Pass Area.
- (3) When Grand Slam was launched, no strategic reserves were available. Enemy's offensive in RBC accentuated the predicament. The balance was restored by calling off this offensive.
- (4) In the RCC, we had adopted an exaggerated forward defensive posture due to which the defences were unbalanced. Once 6 Armoured Division had also been employed on a defensive role, our 1 Corps including 15 Division became unbalanced. This imbalance could have been exploited by Indian thrust along Mehrajke–Badiana instead of hitting against Chawinda and clearing it.
- (5) An imbalance was also created due to 29 Indian Brigade's attack in Jassar Enclave and move of 24 Brigade at the critical time. From then on the defensive operations of 1 Corps were nothing but reactions and crisis management, resulting in piecemeal employment of troops and consequent loss of strategic balance. This imbalance also prevented Pakistan to exploit window of opportunities provided before and during the RCC Operations.
- (6) Imbalance also occurred with the commitment of 7 Infantry Division in Kashmir, 1 Armoured Division in Khem Karan and 6 Armoured Division in Sialkot. There existed an imbalance in our forces between 8 to 12 September, as no strategic reserves were available. The riposte itself suffered from lack of infantry.

b. **India**

- (1) Initial assembly and placing of troops was done wisely. When counter attacks were

launched to capture Haji Pir and Jura Bulge, reserves in 15 Corps area were consumed, thus, creating an imbalance which was exploited by Pakistan, when it launched its offensive against Akhnur.

- (2) When 1st Indian Armoured Division was launched in the RCC, and it was almost bogged down there, India had no strategic reserves to influence the battle and create main effects there.
- (3) Similarly it did not have any reserves to rescue its auxiliary in RBC.

13. **Time Space Ratio (TSR) Matrix.** Concentration of superior forces at the point of decision, at correct point in time is one of the battle winning factors. Both sides did not wholly succeed in this aspect. Details are as under:-

a. **Pakistan**

- (1) During operation Grand Slam, due to change of command and change of responsibility between 7 and 12 Divisions, we lost precious time and lost the advantage of superiority of troops. Indians got time to bring in fresh troops and re-organize their defence.
- (2) Undue delay in establishment of bridgehead for 1 Armoured Division retarded the progress of our riposte. Similarly, lack of infantry and armour's returning to its base at nights, gave Indians time to re-organise their 4 Mountain Division and its reinforcement by 2 Armoured Brigade.
- (3) Exploiting the advantage of interior lines, we successfully moved 1 Armoured Division into RCC, thereby, achieving a superior strength in that decisive zone.

b. **India**

- (1) Indian attack at Jassar (unexpected) was well conceived and took Pakistan by surprise, thereby, enforcing panic and faulty response. Indian however, failed to exploit the window of opportunity.
- (2) On 9-10 September, 1st Armoured Division and 14 Infantry Division were opposed by 24 Brigade minus and 25 Cavalry only. The

- Indians failed to capitalise on their relative superior ratio there.
- (3) In RBC, Indians launched offensive on three axes simultaneously resulting into dissipation and, thereby, failing in achieving relative strength superiority.
 - (4) The time and space relationship could have been influenced by Indian air intervention and disrupted the union of two armoured divisions over a stretch of 70 miles within 48 hours.

Miscellaneous Aspects

14. **Escalation.** Bernard Brodie wrote that “it takes one to start a total war but it takes two to keep it limited.” 1965 War, despite the assumptions and assurances of foreign office, quickly escalated into a general war, this aspect holds important lessons for understanding the process of escalation, as witnessed during this war. After Operation Gibraltar, the initiative passed on to India, who as appreciated initially, played by the rules and kept the conflict limited by mounting a response limited to Kashmir Zone. However, on loss of critical areas in Bedori Bulge, Pakistan applied a contingency in Akhnur, which was an escalation on our part.

15. When the process of escalation was initiated, India faced with the possibility of potential loss in Kashmir, endeavoured to dominate the escalation ladder by widening the area of conflict and attacking the international border. Thereafter, the limited conflict was transformed into a general war with all available means. Importance of understanding second and third tier effects of the contingencies, thus, need to be grasped at length before they are applied in an evolving situation.

16. **Articulation of Command**

a. **Pakistan**

- (1) Initially, 1 Corps was made responsible to control complete operations both in RCC and RBC. GHQ took over the command of operations in RBC to reduce its burden and later on also kept bypassing the Headquarters 1 Corps. Destruction of Jassar Bridge is a case in point.
- (2) Responsibility of Headquarters 12 Division for defensive as well as offensive operations on the entire Kashmir front stretching one an unmanageable length and breadth remains aof debate among strategists.

- (3) Untimely change of command in operation Grand Slam caused the failure of this operation.
 - (4) Absence of a Corps Headquarters in RBC was one of the reasons of failure of riposte, which led to friction between GOCs of I Armoured Division and 11 Division over command aspect.
 - (5) Within 1 Armoured Division, the GOC and brigade commanders were not on the best of terms with each other.
 - (6) Non-existence of Brigade Headquarters in 6 Armoured Division led to the GOC directly commanding the units.
- b. **India.** The Indians had a better command articulation system. But during execution there were serious problems for example:-
- (1) Lack of strategic reserves handicapped the Western Command in influencing either Operation Nepal or Riddle.
 - (2) Almost all infantry divisions in the Main Effort detached their brigades for various tasks. At a stage the divisional commanders of 6 Mountain and 14 Infantry Divisions were virtually without any troops.
 - (3) The armoured division had an organisational imbalance – five armour and three motorised regiments with two brigade headquarters only. The GOC was also commanding the divisional reserves directly and kept employing infantry for occupying firm bases and rear areas.
 - (4) Corps Commander at a stage had no control over the operations. Even the GOC Western Command could not influence the battle during execution.

17. **Senior Leadership.** The senior leadership on both sides did have tactical sense, to react well. But a wholesome understanding of operational strategy and ability to conceive a strategic plan in totality appeared to be lacking. Lieutenant General Sahibzada Yaqub Khan writes to Major General Muhammad Iqbal, Commandant Staff College Quetta in 1978, “My covering note of January 1966 reflects the prejudices that prevailed in the Army at that time. Initiating senior officers into the essential elements of the

higher aspects of their profession was an unpopular and somewhat hazardous undertaking.”

18. Poor Intelligence

- a. Intelligence was a wanting factor in 1965 War. The Military Intelligence Directorate failed to forewarn the field formations not to resort to complete lull, while a full-fledged operation in Kashmir was underway.
- b. The captured mailbag of the Indian armoured division on 5 September was dismissed as a ‘ploy’.
- c. Once 24 Brigade captured operation order of ‘Operation Nepal’ on 9 September, only then 1 Corps realised the gravity of situation and committed 6 Armoured Division prematurely.
- d. We also failed to identify Indian assembly for their main offensive and depended upon assurances of Foreign Office, which proved wrong.
- e. As for India, Operations Gibraltar and Grand Slam came as a total surprise to the Indians.
- f. Indians also failed to locate assembly of our 1 Armoured Division till it was launched in Ravi Beas corridor.

19. Role of East Pakistan in Containing Indian Troops.

India adopted a strategy of preserving status quo in East Pakistan, which suited Pakistan as well. Over three Indian divisions remained deployed there against one of ours.

20. Contribution of Pakistan Navy and Air Force. Both services Chiefs took initiative and went for bold offensive manoeuvres, which immensely contributed towards a favourable end of the 1965 War. Due to air action in Chamb and pre-emptive air strikes of 6-7 September, the PAF enjoyed relative air superiority throughout the war. The Indian Air Force did not fly any close air support missions in support of their offensives on 6 September. Indian intelligence failed in identifying that our air force operated from three bases only. Successful attack at Dwarka and timely placing of Submarine Ghazi deterred Indian Navy from any adventures against our coastal areas.

21. Media and War. In 1965 media, although largely government controlled, came up to play a major part in integrating the nation for the national cause, building up the morale, national spirit and the repute of soldiers. Similarly in India the media failed to play any role in the war, however, they were also to learn their lessons, same came to fore during the 1971 war, while media made a full impact in Kargil Conflict to manifest the role and support of

media in national cause. Another aspect that needs to be reckoned, is the fact that what all media present is not necessarily the truth on ground. The incident of reporting on unrest after Hazrat Bal incidence is a case in point, when Pakistani leadership came to believe that ground was ripe for exploitation.

22. **Logistic Stamina.** Pakistan Army was ill prepared for a war. The modalities for logistic support in Kashmir and when general war broke out, they were out of step with the operational plans. Lack of replacements and limited war stamina, due to reliance on imported military hardware, resulted in lack of will to conduct the war to its logical end.

23. **Offensive Spirit.** Lieutenant Colonel D K Palit, in his book, **'The Essentials of Military Knowledge'** has summed up the principle of 'Security' with the quotation, "*Caution in planning, boldness in execution*". The Indian offensive in Sialkot was characterised by boldness in planning and undue caution in execution. At the start of the war, hesitation to occupy defences and failure to engage enemy's concentration and during the war, piecemeal and defensive employment of armour formations speak volumes on the display of offensive spirit by both the sides.

24. **Courage and Fortitude.** RCC Operations are full of examples of personal and collective courage. Daring actions of 25 Cavalry and 24 Brigade are shining examples of our military history. The mere fact that Indian main could not progress beyond 17 to 18 Kilometers from the working boundary is a shining proof of the fortitude with which our units had fought the war. Louis Karrar, a correspondent for 'Time Magazine' wrote on 22 September 1965, "I may or may not remember the Indo-Pakistan War but I will never forget the smile that the full of nerve the conducting army officer gave me. This smile told me how fearless and brave are the Pakistani young men. Playing with fire to these men from Jawan to the General Officer Commanding was like children playing with marbles in the streets. I asked the GOC, how is it that despite small numbers you are over-powering the Indians? He looked at me, smiled and said, "If courage, bravery and patriotism were purchasable commodities, then India could have got them along with American aid".

25. **National Spirit and Cohesion.** T.V Paul in his book 'Why Nations go to War', writes that, "The India-Pakistan conflict is both enduring and asymmetric, but the power asymmetry is truncated and mitigated by many factors. Pakistan has been successful in reducing the asymmetry through strategy, tactics and alliances with outside powers..." The most positive attribute of this war was that the whole nation stood behind their Armed Forces for

the defence of their country. The public morale and spirit to fight the enemy was what reduced this asymmetry in real terms.

26. **Consequences of the War.** In words of Major General Lachman Singh in his book, '**Missed Opportunities**', "It had indeed been a war of missed opportunities, and to no purpose, political or military". 1965 war in the final analysis can be regarded as the turning point in the history of Indo-Pakistani politics on following counts:-

- a. **Kashmir Dispute.** As a result of Tashkent Talks both parties agreed to resolution of Kashmir and other disputes through peaceful means. This was a policy which Pakistan had pursued before the war and recourse to it, raises the natural question, that why should India give up by diplomacy what it has been able to hold by fighting?
- b. **Government and Politics.** The government the policies and the conduct of the war came into question which led to firing of Foreign Minister Bhutto. East Pakistan felt that it had been left almost defenceless and the same theme was exploited by political leaders like Shiekh Mujibur Rehman, who demanded greater autonomy.
- c. **International Relations**
 - (1) Relations with China improved further while those with US became more distant.
 - (2) Owing to the Soviet role in brokering the peace agreement, there was improvement in relations with Soviet block and significant increase in trade.
- d. **Awakening India.** The war resulted in making India realize its shortcomings, which it overcame to achieve a decisive effect by 1971. John Keegan writes, "The Indian army arose from this defeat like a phoenix from the ashes".

Lessons Learnt

27. The lessons which can be drawn from the analysis of the war are:-

- a. **Unconventional Warfare.** Unconventional operations of such magnitude like Operation Gibraltar call for high standard of training, detailed knowledge of the area of operations, unstinted support from the local population and assured logistic back up.

- b. **Hierarchical Relationship.** Starting from setting the national aims/objectives till application of military strategy for achievement of these, the hierarchical relationship between various tiers of strategy must be maintained for utilizing the nation's war potential optimally and efficiently for any war in the future.
- c. **Correct Interpretation of Environment** Before undertaking operations against the adversary, it is crucial that the environments are realistically interpreted, allies and friendly countries are not depended upon, unless either their interests are involved or they have the will to support and a capability is developed to sustain the war even once isolated.
- d. **Threat Evaluation.** Any flaw in assessment of enemy's intentions, capabilities and will can lead to disastrous consequences. It is, therefore, of utmost importance to grant the enemy his best for evaluating the threat in totality. Having done so, the operations must be planned with due cognizance to own potentials, taking effective measures against all contingencies.
- e. **Importance of Indirect Strategy.** With Kashmir being the bone of contention between the two traditional rivals, application of indirect strategy in harmony with use of military option is of importance. Therefore, our strategy must encompass both these elements.
- f. **Joint Planning and Coordination.** JSHQ must play an active role in developmental strategy and joint planning of the three services. Also, the inter-services' capabilities and limitations must be understood in the correct perspective.
- g. **Intelligence Gathering.** Authentic, accurate and updated information about the enemy has no alternative. All agencies must work in harmony towards this invaluable task.
- h. **Application of Operational Strategy.** It is of vital importance that the three services comprehend the contours of operational strategy and develop the art of applying it effectively during any future conflict. Unless centre of gravity is correctly identified, balance is maintained in the system of

forces, forces are distributed prudently for avoiding early culminating point, a war against a numerically, technologically and economically strong adversary is liable to suffer with undesirable impediments for deciding its fate in own favour.

- i. **Role of a Strong Navy.** With over 95% of our trade being sea-borne, a strong navy, capable of ensuring un-interrupted flow of trade, is a necessity. Therefore, developmental strategy for Pakistan Navy must be focused on this important aspect, and acquisition must be expedited at priority. A balanced fleet with all encompassing complements to effectively counter operational threats from a numerically and technologically superior adversary has no alternative.
- j. **Importance of Air Force.** Pakistan Air Force played a commendable role during the War that was acknowledged by all and sundry. A strong air power in the present era is unquestionable. Emerging trends and ambitious modernization programs of our adversary force us to spend a substantial amount of national exchequer in the acquisition of modern equipment for the Air Force. PAF must be a viable force for the future conflict.
- k. **Logistic Stamina.** We must enhance our logistic stamina to sustain a future conflict with our adversary. Over dependence on foreign aid and assistance must be reduced through indigenous production together with research and development in fields of military hardware.

Conclusion

28. The first major war between Pakistan and India did not bring about a solution to the Kashmir Issue and instead, ended in a stalemate. Both sides claimed victory for the satisfaction of their military as well as the masses, however, there is no denying the fact that we defended the integrity of our frontiers against a numerically superior and shrewd enemy. This does not justify a false sense of superiority against the Indians, since the responsibility of initiating the operations lay with us, and the ultimate result was not in our favour.

29. It can be safely concluded that wars aren't conducted on whims and wishes. These in no case consist of piecemeal reactions only. War, as an instrument of policy, has to be fought by integrating all elements of national power. At the same time an

institutionalised decision-making at national level is a necessity. Joint planning and higher direction of war are equally important. The planners and executioners of the defence policy and military strategy have to be educated and groomed to undertake such important tasks.

30. This presentation may be concluded with a quote from 'History of Indo Pak War-1965, in which Lieutenant General Mahmud Ahmed writes, "modern war is an extremely expensive undertaking, the victor usually suffers as much as the vanquished. However, should the leadership of a country choose to risk war, it must do so wholeheartedly, with total national conviction and commitment". He goes on to say. "The decision to use the military instrument was perhaps taken on the spur of the moment and not as a result of well considered national and military strategy. In the absence of an overall national strategy, the military strategy followed by the Pakistani high command in 1965 was one of expediency rather than one resulting from years of sound, deliberate operational thinking".

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PAKISTAN – INDIA WAR 1971

Introduction

1. Pakistan had been described by many Western and Indian writers as a geographical nonsense and a country disfigured at birth. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad predicted that Pakistan in its present shape would not last more than a quarter of a century. His prediction came true but not because of the unique shape of the country, not even because of the differences in language and culture of the Two Wings but because of the follies of its people and because of the selfishness, insincerity and short-sightedness of its leaders. The most important of all because of the ignominious role played by India during the East Pakistan Crisis.

(Lieutenant General Kamal Matinuddin)

2. The fall of Dacca on 16 December 1971, though a military defeat ultimately, was basically a politico-strategic failure at various tiers of policy-making and implementation. It remains a perpetual and painful memory. It is in this context that a surgical analysis is imperative for our future senior military planners. We must learn from our blunders.

Aim

3. To carry out an in depth analysis of Pakistan India War 1971, with a view to highlighting significant aspects of operational strategy and higher direction of war.

Schme of Presentation

4. The scheme of the study is as under:
- | | | |
|----|-----------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| a. | Part I Environment | -Lt Col Naveed Ahmed Khan |
| b. | Part II Land Operations | -Lt Col Muhammad Yousaf Majoka |
| c. | Part III Naval Operations | -Cdre Iftikhar Ahmed Qureshi, Si (M) |
| d. | Part IV Air Operations | -Air Cdre Usaid-ur-Rehman |
| e. | Part V Analysis and Lessons | -Lt Col Muhammad. Ali (Leader) |

PART-I ENVIRONMENT

General

1. East Pakistan differed from its Western Wing in geographical location, physical features and socio-economic conditions. Separated from the rest of Pakistan by 1600 kilometres of Indian territory, it was comparatively more vulnerable to internal and external pressures than the rest of the country. With an area covering 1,43,998 square kilometres, it was smaller in size than almost all other provinces of Pakistan. Its population of 40 million in 1947 was, however, greater than all the four administrative units in the West combined. This numerical superiority coupled with volatile nature of an ever increasingly frustrated community shifted the dynamics of power to the streets of East Bengal. However, the debacle in East Pakistan cannot be attributed alone to military defeat. It was indeed an outcome of cumulative effect of host of factors, some of which had their roots in the pre-partition era. Behind some of them was a foreign hand, initially hidden and towards the end more open and more pronounced. To put the things in correct perspective, it is important to glance through the overall environment before moving over to conduct and analysis part of 1971 war.

Scope

2. This part encompasses following aspects:-
- a. Causes of Alienation of Bengalis
 - b. Geo-Political Environment
 - (1) Role of Regional Players
 - (2) Role of International Players
 - c. Operational Environment
 - d. Important Conclusions

Causes of Alienation

3. The main causes / factors which contributed towards the alienation of East Pakistan are as under:-

- a. **The Language Issue**
 - (1) A major factor which alienated the Bengalis from the rest of Pakistanis was language. National authorities failed to understand the deep attachment the Bengalis had for their mother tongue. In February, 1948, Mr Dhirendranath, a Hindu member of the East Bengal Congress Party, moved an amendment to the proposed constitution, pleading that Bengali should also be made the

official language of Pakistan. Prime Minister Liaquat Ali Khan opposed the motion, saying that Urdu was the cultural heritage of the Muslims of India and, hence, should be the only national language. The decision was reiterated by Quid-i-Azam in the Constituent Assembly on 25 February 1948 that Pakistan being a Muslim state, Urdu would be its state language. Later in Dacca on 19 March 1948, while addressing the students of Dacca University he again said, “Urdu and Urdu alone will be the lingua-franca of Pakistan”. Hearing it from one, who had single handedly worked towards the creation of Pakistan and fully aware of Jinnah’s honesty and sincerity of purpose no one raised a hue and cry at that point of time. However, an undercurrent of dissatisfaction and disappointment did start and the first sign of a crack in the edifice began to be visible. After the death of Quaid-i-Azam and Liaquat Ali Khan, Khawaja Nazim Ud Din, who had by then become the Prime Minister of Pakistan, made a statement in February 1952 about Urdu becoming the only state language of Pakistan. He is reported to have said, “except for a few persons none in East Bengal demanded to make Bengali a state language.” It led to Language Riots of 1952, which may be termed as the first major jolt to the existence of unified Pakistan. The significance of this issue can be judged from the fact that the first stamp issued by the government of Bangladesh commemorated the two students who died during the language riots of 1952.

- (2) Sheikh Mujib-ur-Rehman, then a non-entity, took up the cause of the Bengali language, an issue which touched the heart of all Bengalis, and soon became a hero.
- (3) Later, 1956 Constitution accepted Bengali as one of the state languages. However, by this time enough bitterness had been caused.

- b. **Economic Factors.** The most serious complaint by the intellectuals and the politicians of East Pakistan was about the so called economic domination of their province by the West Pakistan. Indian Writers like K Subramaniam and D. K Pallit referred to these phenomena as internal colonialism. East Pakistanis felt that their interests were not safe with West Pakistan, controlling the economic resources and the trade imbalance between the two wings, transfer of capital from the East to the West, the increasing gap in the per capita income and the slow rate of economic growth in East Pakistan were highlighted by the Bengali economists. Some of the economic factors are discussed below:-
- (1) **Pre-Partition Factors.** East Bengal was the poorest part of the province of Bengal in un-divided India. It had the lowest percentage of urbanisation, industrialization, literacy, electrical power capacity and per capita income at the time of independence. In 1947, East Pakistan had no jute mill at all, although all the jute consumed by the jute factories in Calcutta was grown in East Bengal. The eight cotton and four sugar mills, which existed in this part of the province, belonged to the Hindus. East Bengal was under-developed and was the hinterland of Calcutta. It could only provide raw material for the industries in West Bengal. The economic activity suffered further at the time of partition by dissecting Calcutta – the economic hub of Bengal from East Bengal and handing it over to India by Redcliff Award. Out of a total of 1,414 factories in un-divided Bengal only 314 were in East Bengal at the time of partition, mostly owned by Hindus.
 - (2) **Post Partition Factors**
 - (a) **Incorrect Policies.** The central government did not do enough to alleviate the economic sufferings of East Pakistanis rather its economic policies further alienated the Bengalis. The geography demanded decentra-

lization of trade and relatively liberal fiscal policies. However, these were quite strictly controlled by the centre, which had negative effects on East Pakistan. The trade between two wings was not only unfavorable to East Pakistan but also sometimes 'illogical'. For instance rubber was first imported from Far East to Karachi and then re-shipped to Chittagong, which raised the price unnecessarily. Similarly camouflage nets, made out of Jute in East Pakistan, used to be sent for dyeing to West Pakistan and then re-shipped to East Pakistan.

- (b) **Disparity in Infrastructure.** There was great disparity in the industrial and communication infrastructure of both wings. Immediately after the partition, the raw material produced could not be consumed due to lack of industry in East Pakistan and closure of free movement to India. It led to dumping of raw material and sharp fall of prices, which further deteriorated the already weak financial condition of the masses.
- (c) **Slow Industrial Development.** Industrial development moved in West Pakistan at a much faster pace than in East Pakistan. Industrial growth took place in sectors other than those which East Pakistan could support viz textiles, leather goods, chemicals, edibles, cement and fertilizers. This meant greater investment of financial resources in West Pakistan than in East Pakistan. The total government outlay initially was heavily tilted towards West Pakistan. In the first seven years, the western wing received 8,017 million

while the figure for East Pakistan was 2,750 million. Anti Pakistan forces, mostly Hindu business community, having strong links with West Bengal, fully exploited the declining economic conditions and slower rate of industrialization in the region in the initial years.

- (d) Despite Ayub Khan's efforts for the development of East Pakistan, the Bengalis remained suspicious. There was an increase of 160% in the public sector spending for East Pakistan during the three Five Years Plans and only an increase of 43% for West Pakistan. Total number of factories completed during the third plan (1965-69) alone was 27. Approximately 600 small and big factories were built in twenty four years, averaging two industrial units every month. But this all could not satisfy the Bengalis.

c. **Political Factors**

- (1) **Controversy over Interpretation of Lahore Resolution.** The Lahore Resolution (later to be known as the Pakistan Resolution) moved by Maulvi Fazl ul Haq at the 27th Session of the All India Muslim League, at Lahore on 23 March 1940 stated that "geographically contiguous units are demarcated into regions, which should be so constituted, with such territorial adjustments as may be necessary, that the areas in which the Muslims are in a majority, as in the North-West and Eastern Zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent **states** in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign". Since the word '**states**' instead of 'state' had been used, a controversy arose whether the two wings were meant to be two different states independent of each other or was it merely an

oversight. It is argued that there was an element of secession inbuilt in the resolution (may be by default) that actually meant to have two different units to constitute independent *states*. It may be understood that the spirit of the resolution was very clear to all and sundry. The correspondence between Mr Jinnah and Mahatma Gandhi of September 1944 also clearly brings out the thinking of the founder of the nation on the question of the creation of one or more Muslim states after the independence of India. To a question posed by Hindu leader that “are the constituents in the two zones to constitute independent states, as an independent member in each zone”, the Quaid replied, “No they will form units of Pakistan”.

(2) **Political Polarization**

- (a) Delay in formulation and later abrogation of 1956 Constitution, political turmoil and imposition of Martial Law in 1958 and again in 1969 led to political polarization and sub-national tendencies.
- (b) 1956 Constitution was passed on 2 March 1956. Pakistan then took the shape of two administrative units, one in the East and one in the West, with parity between them. Although some East Pakistani leaders accepted parity between the two wings, the extremist disapproved One Unit Scheme, as it reduced their majority status at the Centre. One unit Scheme was ill founded as it neither benefited West Pakistan nor was it liked by the Eastern wing. It was designed more to prevent the domination of the Bengalis than to remove their genuine grievances. It in fact created two Pakistans, one in the East and one in the West. According to Zulifqar Ali

- Bhutto, “One unit accentuated the polarization between the East and West.”
- (c) The 1962 Constitution took away the right of the people to choose their own representative directly to the national and provincial legislature. They could only elect local bodies who were termed as basic democrats.
- (3) **Power Sharing.** One of the major complaints of East Pakistanis was that they did not enjoy their due share in the political power structure and were, therefore, denied its fruit. The demand for autonomy arose in the East Wing in early 1950s, when the Bengalis found that their representation in the Centre was virtually nil. This is partly true but not totally correct as during the first decade Bengali Heads of State and Heads of government were equal in number to the non- Bengalis. However, out of 198 ministers, minister of states and deputy minister appointed in the cabinet during the period from 1947-71, 120 were from West Pakistan, whereas, only 78 were from Eastern Wing. There was a dire need of examining the question of distribution of powers between the centre and East Bengal in particular in the very early stages. The feeling of not being allowed to share political power in proportion to its population would not have been sharpened if such visible discrimination was not present.
- (4) **Representation in Government.** When Pakistan came into being, out of 101 Muslims of the central services of India only 18 were from Bengal, thus, occupying only 17.9 % of the government posts. The figures further declined by mid 1950s, for out of 741 top officials only 51 were Bengalis, which brought the percentage down to just over 6 %.
- (5) **Mujib’s Six Points.** Continuation of Ayub’s military rule and failure to address grievances resulted in emergence of secessionist

tendencies, manifested in Mujib's Six Points, which amongst other points called for a separate foreign exchange accounts, paramilitary forces and became a popular political slogan in East Pakistan.

- (6) **Agartala Conspiracy Case.** Indian attempt at subverting the Bengali elements in the Pakistan Armed Forces against the central leadership goes back to 1963. Capitalizing on the economic disparity between East and West Pakistan, they managed to recruit some naval personnel and encouraged them to form an organization to work for the separation of their province from the rest of Pakistan. The theme of West Pakistan exploiting East Bengal was played up. The disgruntled Bengali service men were encouraged to contact senior Bengali politicians and to seek their cooperation for starting revolutionary movement. The most important to be contacted was Sheikh Mujib. In 1967 Sheikh Mujib was alleged in Agartala Conspiracy Case for fomenting a secessionist movement but the case was abruptly withdrawn, making a hero out of Sheikh Mujib.

(7) **General Elections 1970**

- (a) **Prolonged Campaigning.** The Campaigning period of over one year subverted the unity of country. It provided adequate time and opportunity to anti Pakistan forces to further cultivate regionalism and deep-rooted hatred and exploit emotions against their rivals.
- (b) **The Mishandling of Cyclone Issue.** At the height of election campaign, when West Pakistan was being blamed for every ill in East Pakistan, the damage caused by a devastating cyclone further compounded the problem. On November 12, 1970, less than a month before the scheduled

date of the elections, a huge cyclone struck the coastal areas of East Bengal. 120 Islands disappeared, 2000 square miles of territory submerged in the water. Nearly 500,000 persons were dead, 2.5 million rendered homeless and property worth \$ 4.5 billion was destroyed. The centre was slow to respond to the calamity. This allowed Sheikh Mujib to blow up and fully exploit the mishandling of crises by an inefficient and inept politico-military leadership to gain maximum political leverage.

- (c) **Election Results.** General Yahya Khan was expecting a split mandate in East Pakistan, but it turned out to be otherwise and Awami League got sweeping majority, winning 160 out of 162 National Assembly seats in East Pakistan. The results in the West were also quite unexpected, wherein Pakistan Peoples Party won 81 out of 120 National Assembly seats. Hatred against West Pakistanis was evident from election results. In all, Awami League won the mandate and West Pakistan based PPP emerged as a strong opposition.
- (d) **Postponement of Assembly Session.** The result of elections put the government in a dilemma as neither of the two major parties were national in character. Pakistan Peoples Party refused to attend National Assembly Session at Dacca. Unfortunately, Yahya caved in to demands of Mr. Bhutto and the assembly session scheduled for 1 March 1971 postponed, a decision which had far reaching effects on the already fragile situation in East

Pakistan. The decision to postpone the national assembly session robbed the Bengalis of their earned status of majority party in the central legislature. It was exploited by regionalists as denial of right of majority to govern and a sense of betrayal spread amongst the Bengalis. West Pakistan was no more trustworthy for East Pakistan. This was yet another blow to the integrity of Pakistan.

d. **Military Factors**

- (1) **Representation in Army.** In 1947 only 1 % of the Pakistan Army was from East Pakistan. The total number of Bengalis who were recruited in the army in that year was 87 against 2708 from West Pakistan. The gap between two wings, as far as entry into army was concerned, remained substantial in coming years. By 1963, the situation began to change and the gap between the Bengalis and non-Bengalis in the Armed Forces began to reduce.
- (2) **Share in Defence Budget.** Since no worthwhile threat was expected in the eastern theatre in 1965 War, the Wing was relegated to a lower degree in defence preparation, raising a question about defence of Eastern Wing, whereas Sheikh Mujib suggested in his famous six points that defence budget be shared on the basis of military manpower contributed in the defence establishment. It would be useful to recall here the situation in the pre-independence India. The revenue of the central government of India amounted to Rs 1.21 billions in 1944. Out of this Rs 510 millions was spent on the Army. The bulk of this amount was provided by the provinces, which did not provide the manpower. Bengal provided 60 % of the outlay with only 2 % representation.

- (3) **Operation Search Light.** The military crackdown of 25 March 1971, due to inability to find a political solution, was a strategic mistake, which led to point of no return. It aggravated the situation and discredited the Army, accompanied with the feelings of animosity. Almost the entire East Pakistan turned against West and pro-Pakistan civilian administration virtually seized to exist in East Pakistan. East Bengal Regiments defected and Mukti Bahini launched insurgency. Bangladesh Government in exile was established at Calcutta and millions of refugees fled to India.
- (4) **Mukti Bahini.** Mukti Bahini made material contribution in shaping the operational environment in favour of India.
- (5) **Failure of Intelligence Agencies.** Being mostly from West Pakistan, lacking local support and facing language problem, intelligence agencies failed to correctly assess worsening situation.
- e. **Role of Media.** On the day of Operation Search Light, Foreign journalists in Dhaka were sent out of the country. This proved to be a key mistake, as after that most of the foreign press became susceptible to Indian propaganda. As far as own media were concerned, newspapers and handouts failed to report the casualties suffered by non Bengalis on the excuse that it would disapprove the Two Nation Theory.

Geo-Political Environment

4. Role of Regional Players

- a. **India.** Realizing that the military crackdown had brought East West relations to the lowest ebb, spoiled Pakistan's image in the international community and the national and military morale was at its lowest, Indian leadership was sure that Pakistan could be dismembered through a combination of exterior manoeuvre and use of military instrument. Steps taken to materialize this were:
 - (1) Envoys were sent around the world to project Indian view.

- (2) Theme of Bengali genocide and refugees problem was played.
- (3) Bangladesh government in exile was established in Calcutta to assure Indian commitment to their cause.
- (4) Indian lobby in US played vital role in eroding Pakistani support.
- (5) Signed Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation with Soviet Union on 9 August 1971 to formalize support of USSR .
- (6) Suitable campaigning season was recommended by Indian military leadership to Indra Gandhi to allow adequate time for build up of logistics and to deny any chances of Chinese intervention.
- (7) To bring Pakistan Army to a point of psychological collapse, Mukti Bahini was organized from defected soldiers of EBR, EPR, retired soldiers, volunteer refugees, and trained to conduct operations against Pakistan Army before the Indian military moved in. Initially, between March and April 1971, the Mukti Bahini supported the Indian Border Security Force in keeping Pakistan Army away from the international frontiers and to enable the Indian Army to gain maximum information about the transfrontier situation. In the second phase from May to July Mukti, dressed in civilian clothes, were required to penetrate deep inside East Pakistan and carry out subversive activities. In third phase, which began in August 1971, the Mukti Bahini supported by Indian Artillery fire from across the border were directed to attack Pakistani border posts.

b. **China**

- (1) China was involved in back channel diplomacy with USA and had uneasy relations with USSR. Moscow had warned China to stay out of Indo-Pakistan conflict.
- (2) China remained in full support of Pakistan in 1971 crisis, short of physical intervention.

- (3) China provided full diplomatic support to Pakistan at the Security Council during the conflict.

Role of International Players

5. Role of international players is summarised as below:

a. **USA**

- (1) Pakistan was an ally of USA since 1954. However, Pak-US relations got affected after 1965 war and military crackdown of 1971.
- (2) Some soft corner was shown due to Pakistan's role in Sino-US rapprochement.
- (3) During war, US support remained confined to asking India for secession of hostilities and a token suspension of the supply of some war material to India.
- (4) 35 million-dollar aid to Pakistan was cut off by a pro-Indian US congress.
- (5) As a symbolic support and evacuation of US citizens from East Pakistan, seventh fleet was dispatched to the Bay of Bengal.

b. **USSR**

- (1) Soviet offer for friendship in early 1950s was rejected by Pakistan. The relations between the USSR and Pakistan remained strained ever since Pakistan joined SEATO and CENTO.
- (2) Soviet Union's support to India was formalized through the Treaty of Peace, Friendship and Cooperation, signed between India and USSR on 9 August 1971.
- (3) The USSR supported India in the UN as well as blocked UNSC resolutions tabled during the war.
- (4) She also supported India militarily in build-up before the war.

c. **United Kingdom.** UK remained neutral during initial months of the conflict. However, after military crackdown of March 1971 - Operation Search Light, it started to support India openly and further applied pressure on Pakistan by cutting of all fresh aid and blamed Pakistan Army for committing atrocities, but made no mention of the subversive activities of Bengali Guerillas. It also allowed setting up of a

‘High Commission’ by Bangladesh in London from September 1971.

- d. **Muslim World.** None of the Muslim countries gave any substantial support to Pakistan in its hours of need. India played the theme that the crisis was not of Muslims against Hindus, but the Muslim against the Muslims.

Operational Environment

6. **Leadership and Decision Making.** As head of state and Commander-in-Chief, General Yahya Khan banked on a select group of army officers, who were handling most of the affairs. For quite some time, civilians were kept at bay. The decision-making by Yahya Khan was marked by a paucity of paperwork, analysis and thought, as his colleagues observed the decisions were impulsive and sometimes paradoxical.

7. **Training and Operational Planning.** Indian Army went through a methodical phase of preparation before the war. On the contrary, Pakistan Army, which had been deprived of regular training in the previous years due to martial law duties, was not as well prepared.

8. **Equipment of Armed Forces.** The US embargo on military aid to India and Pakistan placed after 1965 war, produced major challenges for Pakistan armed forces, as it was mainly dependent on US, whereas, India also banked on USSR.

9. **Morale.** Due to hostile local populace, a prolonged employment on internal security situation and, above all, the absence of clear political direction, morale of armed forces had gone down.

10. **Rear Area Situation.** In East Pakistan, the rear area situation was far from satisfactory, due to a totally hostile population and extremely poor and vulnerable communication infrastructure.

11. Military Strategy

- a. **India.** India planned to seek decision in the East by launching regulated offensives and by adopting strategy of defensive offensive in the West with naval blockade in the south and air supremacy from the outset.
- b. **Pakistan.** Based on the concept of defence of East lies in the West Pakistan adopted offensive strategy in the West and defensive in the East.

Important Conclusions

12. Major conclusions from environment are as under:-
 - a. The disillusionment of masses in East Pakistan was tragic result of historical, socio-economic and political factors and failure of central government to address these issues in time.
 - b. The greater devolution of power, avoidance of centralization and more regional autonomy could remove much of the grievances, which politicians with vested interests did not do.
 - c. The faulty National Strategy led to a faulty Military Strategy, thus alienating East Pakistan from West Pakistan and handing over initiative to India before commencement of the war.
 - d. Successful exterior manoeuvre by India isolated Pakistan, while India was able to justify her invasion of the East Pakistan on moral and humanitarian grounds.
 - e. By successful combination of interior and exterior manoeuvres of supporting insurgency and concentrating superior forces along its borders, India posed a serious dilemma for Pakistani forces to fight on both internal as well as external fronts simultaneously.

PART-II

LAND OPERATIONS

General

1. This part of the paper has been developed on the following lines:
 - a. Topography of Pakistan.
 - b. Conclusions from topography.
 - c. Comparison of forces.
 - d. Political aims, military strategies and objectives.
 - e. Assembly and distribution of forces.
 - f. Concept of operations.
 - g. Conduct of operations.

Topography of Pakistan

2. **Western Theatre.** Indo-Pak border in the Western Theatre stretched to approximately 3350 kilometers from Indra-Kohli Pass in the north to Rann of Kutch in the south. West Pakistan had limited depth, the least being in area of Reti-Rahimyar Khan. Important cities like Lahore and Sialkot were perilously close to the border, calling for forward defensive posture in case of hostilities. Western Theatre could be divided into three main sectors as under:-

- a. **Northern Sector.** It comprises mountainous region of Gilgit-Baltistan and Azad Kashmir. The area is characterized by high mountains, ridgelines, valleys and passes with combat season restricted to a few summer months in area of Northern Zone. Large scale infantry operations are not possible in this sector. Operations by mechanized forces are impossible except for Chhamb area.
- b. **Central Sector.** It comprises the plains of Punjab. Ravi-Chenab and Ravi-Sutlej form the main corridors in this sector. Due to numerous waterways criss-crossing each other, dense habitation and thick vegetation, large scale operations by mechanized forces are difficult and are compartmented into smaller manoeuvres, as they move away from the border.
- c. **Southern Sector.** The Southern Sector comprises sandy deserts and, barring Nara Gap and SCARP in the south, is ideal for large scale mechanized operations.

3. **Eastern Theatre.** East Pakistan was separated from the West by about 1600 kilometres. It was surrounded by India from almost all directions, except for a small border with Myanmar and the Bay of Bengal. In the west lay the Indian state of West Bengal, in the north Meghalaya and Assam, in the east Tripura and Mizoram and in the south Indian dominated Bay of Bengal. The grain of the ground was from north to south. Three main rivers; Ganges, Jamuna and Meghna divided the country into four distinct and isolated sectors. These sectors were as follows:

- a. **South-Western Sector or Jessore Sector**
Important towns of Jessore, Jhenida and Khulna lied in this sector. It dominated all roads leading to Dacca from West and to Chalna Port. This sector offered the second shortest approach to Dacca from India, owing to lesser distance.
- b. **North - Western Sector or Rangpur - Bogra Sector.** Major towns in the area were Dinajpur, Rajshahi and Bogra. The significant aspect of this sector was its narrow waistline at Hilli. This sector provided the longest approach to Dacca and involved crossing of several rivers, including the Jamuna.
- c. **Northern Sector or Mymensingh - Jamalpur Sector.** This sector included the areas of Mymensingh, Jamalpur, Tangail and Dacca. The Brahmaputra, a local distributary of the Jamuna, was the only major water obstacle. This sector offered the least obstacles to approach Dacca, as its roads ran along the grain of the country.
- d. **Eastern Sector or Sylhet-Comilla Sector.** It includes areas east of River Meghna, it had important communication centres like Sylhet and Comilla. Chittagong, the main sea-port in East Pakistan was in this sector along with important ferries at Bhairab Bazar, Chandpur and Daudkundi. This sector offered the shortest approach to Dacca.

4. **Communication Infrastructure and Climate.** Thickly populated, extensively cultivated and forested, East Pakistan was under-developed in communication infrastructure. The monsoon used to break in full force by the middle of May and continued till 1st week of October.

Conclusions from Topography (Eastern Theatre)

5. Since major military operations were conducted in Eastern Theatre, therefore, conclusions from topography of Eastern Theatre shall only be highlighted, which are as follows:-

- a. **Terrain in General.** The low lying country, heavy monsoon rains, paucity of surface communication and large rivers combined to make East Pakistani terrain boggy, compartmented and difficult for long drawn war, therefore, dictated a short and swift campaign.
- b. **Multi-Dimensional Approaches.** India was flanking East Pakistan on almost all sides, thus, multi-directional approaches could be used by India. Naval blockade in the south by India could further compound the problem in East Pakistan and completely isolate it from West Pakistan.
- c. **Operations on Exterior Lines.** 1600 kilometres distance between East and West Pakistan, placed India on interior lines in overall context. However, in East Pakistan, Indian forces were operating on exterior lines.
- d. **Extended Frontages.** Absence of natural obstacle and presence of a number of salients along the border, forced forward defensive posture. Multi-directional approach duly supported by naval blockade in the south further accentuated the defender's problems.
- e. **Advantages of Interior Lines.** Poor communication infrastructure coupled with the presence of natural obstacles in East Pakistan made it difficult to exploit the advantages of operating on interior lines.
- f. **Superior Strategic Orientation.** Pakistan enjoyed superior strategic orientation around the narrow belt of Silliguri Corridor, which had the only road link between West Bengal with Assam.
- g. **Compartmentation Effect.** Large rivers with numerous tributaries and poor communication network made cohesion of defences difficult, thus, compartmented the entire East Pakistan. It created the similar effects on the offensive forces as well.
- h. **Significance of Dacca and Dacca Bowl.** Dacca, being the hub of communication and political power

centre, was the obvious Centre of Gravity. The Dacca bowl, which consisted of an open and comparatively flat piece of about 100 x 60 kilometres area around Dacca, had a great defence potential as it was naturally protected by three major rivers with only one accessible approach from the North.

6. **Salients.** The geographical configuration of East Pakistan created a number of salients and narrow necks of land, making them vulnerable to attacks. Significant salients were as under:-

- a. Pachagarh salient in the Northwest stepping into Silliguri gap connecting West Bengal and Assam.
- b. Kurigram salient was located next to Pachagarh.
- c. India surrounded Balonia salient, East of Comilla on three sides
- d. Out of all the salients, Feni was most vulnerable. A deliberate push by Indian ground forces by a few miles into Feni neck could cut Chittagong Port and a large tract of East Pakistan, without any major effort, from the rest of the province. This was in fact an ideal objective to raise the flag of Bangladesh on a small chunk of captured territory of East Pakistan.

7. **Communication Network**

- a. **India.** Under-developed communication network in Tripura and Nagaland posed serious problems with regard to movement and assembly.
- b. **East Pakistan.** Inadequate road network, limited railway links and difficult cross country movement, forced static defences.

8. **Miscellaneous Conclusions**

- a. Sundarbans in the South and Chittagong Hill Tracts (rising to heights of 2000 feet) in the Southeast were insurmountable obstacles, suitable for Guerrilla operations.
- b. During Monsoon (May to October) vehicular movement was restricted to main metalled roads only, thereby, making interdiction by the enemy to disrupt movement during war much easier.
- c. Large scale operations and use of mechanized forces was possible during dry weather from November to March. Therefore, besides other factors, weather conditions could not be ignored, while planning a major offensive.

Comparison of Forces

9. The overall relative strength situation at the beginning of the war was as under:-

- a. **Eastern Theatre.** India enjoyed superiority of forces in the Eastern Theatre. Comparison is as follows:-

Formations	Pakistan	India	Ratio
Corps HQ	1	3	1:3
Infantry/Mountain Divisions	3	8	1:2.6
Infantry/Mountain Brigades	9	28	1:3
Para Brigades	-	1	0:1
Infantry Battalions	34	72	1:2.1
Armoured Regiments	1	6	1:6
Independent Armoured Squadrons	1	3	1:3
Artillery Regiments	6	46	1:8
Anti Aircraft Regiments	1	4	1:4
Paramilitary Forces (Battalions)	13	32	1:3
Mukti Bahini	-	0.1 million	0:1

- b. Generally, the ratio in major arms in East Pakistan was as follows:-

Arm	Pakistan	India
Infantry	1	3
Armour	1	6
Artillery	1	8
Mukti Bahini	0	1

- c. **Western Theatre.** In the Western Theatre of operation, India had also superiority. Comparison of forces is as under:-

Formations	Pakistan	India	Ratio
Corps HQ	3	3	1:1
Armoured Division	2	1	2:1

Infantry/Mountain Division	10	13	1:1.3
Independent Armoured Brigades	2	4	1:2
Independent Infantry Brigades	1	3	1:3

10. **Overall Comparison of Forces.** Overall Comparison of forces between Pakistan (East and West Pakistan) and India is as follows:

Formations	Pakistan	India	Ratio
Corps HQ	4	6	1:1.5
Armoured Division	2	1	2:1
Infantry/Mountain Division	14	25	1:2
Independent Armoured Brigades	2	4	1:2
Independent Infantry Brigades	1	6	1:6
Para Brigades	1	2	1:2
Mukti Bahini	-	0.1	0:1

million

Political Aims, Military Aims, Objectives and Strategies

11. **India**

- a. **Indian Political Aims.** Indian aim was to dismember Pakistan and create an independent state of Bangladesh. Different versions of Indian political objectives in 1971 War were as under:-
- (1) Major General B.K Palit narrates the Indian political aim as, “liberate Bangladesh as quickly as possible and fight a holding action in the West and the North if attacked”.
 - (2) Lieutenant General JFR Jacob describes as, “elimination of Pakistani Forces from Bangladesh, hold West Pakistanis in a position of defence-offensive, while Bangladesh was liberated”.
 - (3) Lieutenant General Kamal Matinuddin writes, “dismembering Pakistan and destroying the capability and image of Pakistan Army in West Pakistan”.

- (4) Brigadier Haroon Arif explains as, “dismember Pakistan, create an independent state of Bangladesh and, thereby, invalidate the Two Nation Theory”.

b. **Indian Military Aims and Objectives**

- (1) **Eastern Theatre.** Indian aim was to dismember Pakistan and establish Government of Bangladesh. Later on, when the Indians managed to considerably improve their relative military strength situation by shifting forces from the Chinese border, military objectives were raised to that of capture of almost whole of East Pakistan and destroying maximum forces in the process. Lieutenant General JFR Jacob outlined following objectives in his plan:-

- (a) The final objective was to be in Dacca, the geo-political and geo-strategic heart of East Pakistan.
 - (b) Subsidiary objectives were to be selected with the aim of securing communication centres and the destruction of Pakistani command and control capabilities.
- (2) **Western Theatre.** The Indian posture against West Pakistan was tactically offensive but strategically defensive. This posture was to be maintained at least till the successful outcome of war in the Eastern Theatre and its ability to switch forces towards Western Theatre. India selected limited objectives in West Pakistan. An all out offensive in West Pakistan would have attained the political aim, while unnecessarily exposing India to vulnerability at political and military levels. Indian objectives in the Western Theatre were as follows: -
 - (a) Inflict as much damage on Pakistan’s war machine as possible, so as to eliminate any offensive threat in the future.
 - (b) Liquidate Shakargarh bulge, thereby, enhancing depth with regard to her

- vulnerable line of communication Samba-Kathua-Jammu.
 - (c) Straighten up certain important bulges in Kashmir and re-align the Cease Fire Line accordingly.
 - (d) Seize sufficient Pakistani territory with a view to ultimately using it as a bargaining chip during political negotiations.
 - (e) Objective assigned were to capture Marala Headworks, Sialkot, Pasrur and Narowal and exploit success towards Wazirabad and Gujrat.
- c. **Indian Military Strategy against East Pakistan.**

It was to seek decision in the East by launching a well-regulated offensive, while maintaining a strategically defensive and tactically offensive posture in the West till successful completion of operations in East Pakistan. Details are as under:

 - (1) **Isolate Pakistani Forces by Establishing Naval Blockade.** The capture or effective blockade of two major ports of entry to stop further build-up in the region, after the outbreak of war as well as create a psychology of isolation among the Pakistani troops and the fear of being cut off from West Pakistan.
 - (2) **Achieve Air Supremacy.** Neutralise Pakistan Air Force in the initial stages to achieve complete air supremacy.
 - (3) **Force Committal along the Borders.** Conduct operations in border areas in support of Mukti to draw and tie down bulk of Pakistani forces to peripheral areas and cause premature committal of reserves to force denuding and weakening of defence of Dacca.
 - (4) **Speedy Operations.** The utmost speed was visualised in reaching vital objectives, bypassing the opposition encountered en-route was to be accepted.
 - (5) **Deny Inter-Sector Movement.** Securing such objectives which forbade inter-sector movement. This aimed at separating the

Pakistan formations so that they would not be able to fight cohesive battles and deny planned withdrawal to depth position, especially those visualised for the defence of Dacca.

- (6) **Exploitation.** Once Pakistan was defeated in detail by this manoeuvre, the race for Dacca would be started by any formation in a position to do so. It was fully appreciated that without the capture of Dacca the campaign could not be concluded successfully.

d. **Indian Operational Strategy against Eastern Theatre.** Eastern Command formulated following operational strategy for East Pakistan:-

- (1) Draw Pakistani forces to the border and dissipate reserves.
- (2) Launch major thrust at key communication centres, bypass fortified defensive positions.
- (3) Destroy Pakistan's command and control network, paralysing her forces.
- (4) As opportunity arose, cross the Meghna and Padma to supplement the main thrust from North of Dacca.

e. **Indian Operational Strategy against Western Theatre.** In the West, India aimed at making limited territorial gains as a bargaining lever. The operational strategy was:

- (1) **Defensive Offensive.** To maintain requisite force level for defensive offensive, leaving the onus of escalation on Pakistan.
- (2) **Limited-Offensive.** To launch limited offensives without getting inextricably involved in major battles.

12. **Pakistan**

- a. **Political Aim.** Pakistan's political aim was to maintain and preserve the territorial integrity of Pakistan. However, political aim for East Pakistan was to deny Mukti Bahini to control any territory in East Pakistan, on which they could declare a Government of Bangladesh.

- b. **Military Objectives-Eastern Theatre** Pakistan's military objectives in the Eastern theatre were:

- (1) Suppression of insurgency.

- (2) Defence of East Pakistan against external threat.
- c. **Operational Policy.** In the operational directive issued in September 1971 by the General Headquarters, following parameters of operational policy were mentioned: -
 - (1) East Pakistan was to be defended by a mobile defence.
 - (2) It envisaged guarding the border with light forces, while holding in strength the strategically important areas in each sector including the Dacca bowl, which because of three major rivers around the capital, did afford a strong defensible position.
 - (3) It was also mentioned that the Eastern Command was to be kept in being.

Assembly and Distribution of Forces

13. **Indian Forces in Eastern Theatre.** India had deployed a total of eight mountain/infantry divisions and four independent infantry brigades against the Eastern Theatre:

- a. **South-Western Sector.** 2 Corps with 9 Infantry Division and 4 Mountain Division.
- b. **North-Western Sector.** 33 Corps with 20 Mountain Division, 71 Mountain Brigade, 340 Mountain Brigade and Brigade ex-6 Mountain Division.
- c. **Eastern Sector.** 4 Corps with 8 Mountain Division, 23 Mountain Division and 57 Mountain Division.
- d. **Northern Sector.** 101 Communication Zone, having a division size force (95 Mountain Brigade and 167 Mountain Brigade).
- e. **Reserves.** 2 x independent infantry brigade groups and 50 Para Brigade (2 Brigades, ex-6 Mountain Division).

14. **Indian Forces in Western Theatre.** Assembly of Indian forces in Western Theatre was completed by 1st week of November:-

- a. **Kashmir and Sialkot Sector (15 Corps).** 15 Corps (5 infantry divisions and one armoured brigade) was responsible for operations in Kashmir and Sialkot Sectors.
- b. **Shakargarh Sector (1 Corps).** Comprising four infantry divisions, and two armoured brigades, the

Corps was given offensive task of capturing Pasrur and then developing operations up to Marala Ravi Link Canal, with the aim of coordinating offensive with 15 Corps.

- c. **Lahore - Fazilka (11 Corps) Sector.** 11 Corps comprised three infantry divisions and one armoured brigade, was responsible for the defence of area south of River Ravi.
- d. **Rajasthan Sector (Southern Command).** This sector had two infantry divisions and one armoured brigade.
- e. **Strategic Reserve.** One armoured and one infantry division at Muktsar.

15. **Pakistani Forces**

- a. **Pakistani Forces - Eastern Theatre.** In addition to three infantry divisions available, two additional adhoc divisions were raised. The forces were positioned as follows:
 - (1) **Southwestern Sector (Jessore).** 9 Division was at Jessore. It had 2 regular and one adhoc brigade.
 - (2) **Northwestern Sector (Bogra).** 16 Division was at Natore. It had three regular brigades.
 - (3) **Northern Sector (Mymensingh).** 36 Adhoc Division in this sector with 93 Adhoc Brigade at Mymensingh.
 - (4) **Eastern Sector (Sylhet-Chittagong)**
 - (a) **14 Division.** 14 Division had two regular and one adhoc brigade.
 - (b) **39 Adhoc Division.** It had two regular and two adhoc brigades.
 - (5) **Reserves.** One brigade, initially earmarked for the defence of Dacca, was moved to the Eastern Sector prior to outbreak of hostilities.
- b. **Pakistani Forces - Western Theatre**
 - (1) In the Western Theatre, assembly of forces had been generally completed by the end of October 1971, as follows:-
 - (a) **Kashmir Sector.** 12 Division.
 - (b) **Chhamb Sector.** 23 Division and 2 Independent Armoured Brigade.

- (c) **Sialkot Sector.** 1 Corps, comprising 8 Division, 15 Division and 8 Independent Armoured Brigade.
- (d) **Lahore-Sulaimanke Sector.** 4 Corps comprising 10 Division, 11 Division, 105 Independent Brigade and 3 Independent Armoured Brigade.
- (e) **Desert Sector.** 18 Division.
- (f) **Reserves**
 - i. **Army Reserve North.** 6 Armoured Division and the newly raised 17 Division, located at Gujranwala were to restore balance in the Ravi-Chenab Corridor in 1 Corps area.
 - ii. **Army Reserve South.** 2 Corps, comprising 1 Armoured Division, 7 Division and the newly raised 33 Division, was tasked to launch counter offensive.

Indian Concept of Operations

16. **Indian Assessment of Situation.** Indian assessments of the pre-war situation indicated that an offensive from Pakistan alone or in unison with China would inextricably engage Indian forces along Western and Northern fronts respectively. Following were also visualized:-

- a. A limited offensive with a Chinese consent in Silliguri corridor.
- b. A limited offensive against Calcutta.
- c. A limited offensive in Tripura area.

17. **Indian Concept of Operations - Eastern Theatre**

- a. **Mission.** Capture East Pakistan for declaring an independent Bangladesh and destroy maximum Pakistani forces in the process.
- b. **Hypotheses.** Indians had hypothesized that East Pakistan would be defended in the following two ways:-
 - (1) **H-1.** Adopt forward defensive posture, based along the border out-posts and conversion of vital towns into strong points/fortified positions to deny loss of territory. Gradually

withdraw to the depth positions to take up defence of Dacca, as fortress with a view to denying it at all costs.

- (2) **H-2.** Adopt rearward defence along major rivers, while defending Dacca as fortress and denying it at all costs.
- (3) **Rider Clause.** All important border towns and communication centres to be converted into fortresses/strong points.
- (4) **Reserves.** Holding some reserves around Dacca.

18. **Scheme of Operations.** The operation was planned in four phases:-

a. **Phase-I: Build up and Assembly**

- (1) **Isolation.** Imposing naval blockade against East Pakistan and sever direct air link with West Pakistan to isolate physically and psychologically.
- (2) **Cause Attrition.** Continuously engaging Pakistani forces with the extensive support of Mukti Bahini, thus, dispersing along borders, depleting numerical strength and lowering their morale, before the main offensive was launched.

b. **Phase-II: Preparatory/Preliminary Manoeuvre.** Intensified attacks along the borders were to be launched in order to:

- (1) Entice and displace Pakistani reserves along the border.
- (2) Capture suitable launching sites for the main offensive.

c. **Phase-III: Offensive Manoeuvre.** Launch a multi-pronged offensive, by-passing the main defences and preventing withdrawal of troops as a cohesive force to Dacca.

- (1) **Main Effort.** Main Effort by 4 Corps, with three divisions plus a Mukti Bahini brigade in Easter Sector, to capture area upto Meghna and then capture Dacca, as and when possible.
- (2) **Auxiliary Efforts.** Three auxiliary efforts were to be launched as follows:-

- (a) 2 Corps with two divisions along Jessore approach.
- (b) 33 Corps, comprising two divisions along Bogra approach.
- (c) 101 Communication Zone with division size force along Mymensingh approach.

Indian Concept of Operations - Western Theatre

19. Indian Visualization of Situation

- a. The situation in East Pakistan was virtually regulated by India in 1971, therefore, as it deteriorated further, India visualised an increased possibility of Pakistan going on an offensive or a pre-emptive in West Pakistan.
- b. The Indians also appreciated that to Pakistan, the security of West Pakistan was more important, even at the expense of East Pakistan. Therefore, the likelihood of Pakistan taking initiative in the West was highly probable.
- c. Indians assessed that an offensive in Ravi-Chenab Corridor and adjacent areas would be undertaken by Army Reserve North, while operations South of Sutlej will be undertaken by 2 Corps. It was also visualised that while any of the hypotheses materialized, all Pakistani holding formations would launch local offensives to improve the defensive posture.

20. **Mission.** While remaining strategically on defensive and tactically on offensive, undertake limited offensive to thwart any offensive by Pakistani forces by capturing limited but sensitive objectives.

21. **Hypotheses.** Indians had conceived following hypotheses in the Western Theatre:-

- a. **H-1**
 - (1) **Kashmir.** Division plus two brigades offensive action between Poonch and Chhamb. Main along Chhamb and diversionary along Naushera.
 - (2) **Ravi Chenab Corridor.** To threaten the sensitive area of Jammu, Samba and Madhopur Headwork, thereby, extending its hold on the plain sector upto Parmandal Range, if fully successful. Otherwise, disrupt

- Indian rail and road communication between Pathankot-Jammu.
- (3) **Ravi-Beas Corridor.** Either to develop two thrust from Dera Baba Nanak-Gil Ferry and from Kasur-Khem Karan towards Beas or to break out from a central bridgehead along Grand Trunk Road and then divide it into two thrusts Northwest and Southwest to envelop Indian defences from rear.
 - (4) **South of Sutlej.** To develop a thrust east of Sutlaj either between Hussainiwala-Sulaimanke in general area of Mamdot-Jalalabad to secure the territory upto the Twin Rajasthan Canal to secure the towns of Ferozepur, Faridkot and Malout.
- b. **H-2.** Launch a division plus size effort across the cease fire line in Chhamb Sector, with an auxiliary in Poonch or Jhangar Sector.
 - c. **H-3.** Isolate Jammu and Kashmir by attacking and severing communication between Pathankot and Jammu, employing a Corps. This could be combined with another offensive across the Cease Fire Line in Chhamb or Poonch, employing the defensive formation already in position.
 - d. **H-4.** Offensive from Nainakot to Gurdaspur with 1 Corps to cut off base at Pathankot of Jammu and Kashmir. This could be combined with operations in Kashmir or in the south with 2 Corps.
 - e. **H-5.** Offensive through Dera Baba Nanak to capture Amritsar or the Beas Bridge.
 - f. **H-6.** An offensive against Amritsar or Ferozepur or in between the two to capture Harike or Beas Bridge and thus cut off Ferozepur and Amritsar.
 - g. **H-6.** An offensive in the south with 2 Corps in Fazilka area to cut off the forces in Punjab (most dangerous).
22. **Scheme of Operations.** Launch three-pronged offensive in Ravi - Chenab Corridor to eliminate Shakargarh salient and to capture Tanda, Marala, Sialkot and breakout towards Wazirabad and from Tanda towards Gujrat.
- a. Limited offensives in Rajasthan and Kashmir to capture territory and improve posture.

- b. Maintain strategic reserve of an armoured and an infantry division in Muktasar-Kot Kapura to counter Pakistani offensive from South of Sutlej.
- c. To frustrate the choice of these options individually or in combination, the Indian planners desired a multi-pronged offensive into Pakistan territory north of Ravi, simultaneously or staggered in timing in accordance with the opportunity offered, after Pakistanis revealed their hand. The plan envisaged the movement on either side of the Chenab towards Tanda and Gujrat as far as Alexander Bridge and upto the Marala Ravi Link Canal, thereby, threatening Sialkot with one prong of the offensive.
- d. Reduce Shakargarh Bulge east of the fortress line of Zafarwal-Dhamtal-Narowal, to draw strike forces.
- e. Develop towards Qila Sobha Singh from the direction of Gil Ferry.
- f. Prong north of Chenab and Gil Ferry were aimed at dividing Pakistani strike forces in north, then reducing the opposition to the main 1 Corps thrust and indirectly helping its piecemeal destruction.
- g. If these objectives were achieved and strike forces in south were employed to meet the threat to sensitive areas in and around Shakargarh Bulge, Indian 1 Armoured Division supported by one infantry division and mustering whatever from holding forces to be launched across Sutlej to secure sensitive Pakistani area of Luliani-Raja Jang-Riawind upto Upper Bari Doab Canal.

Pakistan's Concept of Operations - Eastern Theatre

23. **Mission.** Defend East Pakistan and deny capture of Dacca at all costs. There is a clear dichotomy in the positions taken by Lieutenant General Amir Abdullah Khan Niazi, Commander Eastern Command and General Gul Hassan Chief of General Staff on the issue of mission. claims that the mission assigned to the Eastern Command was to, "Defend Dacca at all cost and, within permissible limits, impose delay on the enemy invading East Pakistan". On the contrary General Niazi asserts that the mission spelled out to him was, "Evict guerrillas. Do not allow any chunk of territory to fall into the enemy hands which they can declare as Bangladesh. Defend East Pakistan against external aggression".

- a. **Hypotheses.** Eastern Command visualised the Indian threat as follows:
- (1) **H-1.** Main Effort from the direction of east around Feni-Comilla, with a view to capturing area up to east of Meghna. Subsequently, capture Dacca, if situation permitted, by coordinating para drop at Tangail. Two auxiliary efforts from South West and Northwest
 - (2) **H-2.** Main Effort from the west, with a view to capturing all areas west of River Jamuna initially, and Dacca subsequently, if situation permitted. Two auxiliary efforts from Northwest and East respectively.
 - (3) **H-3.** Main effort of three infantry divisions plus an infantry brigade and two Mukti Bahini brigades directed against Brahmanbaria, Comilla and Chandpur, while keeping Dacca as ultimate objective. Two auxiliary efforts with two divisions each supported by one to two armour regiments, one against Rangpur and Hilli and the other against Jessore. An effective Indian naval blockade would be established and achieve air superiority/supremacy with a day or two.
- b. **Scheme of Operations.** The defensive plan was based on the assumption that India would not venture a large scale offensive, aimed at capturing entire East Pakistan. Instead, a sizeable chunk of territory would be captured to establish Bangladesh. The concept of operations was, therefore, based on the political aim of not allowing any territory to fall and dealing with Muktis supported by Indian Army as follows:-
- (1) Adopt forward defensive posture and defend every inch of territory.
 - (2) Defence to be based on border outposts, reinforced by a line of defence as far forward as tactically feasible. A number of strong points and fortresses were to be developed in depth on all approaches. The gaps were to be surveilled by mobile reserves.

- (3) After the initial battle, if necessary, fall back to strong points.
- 24. **Pakistan's Concept of Operations - Western Theatre**
 - a. **Mission.** While ensuring territorial integrity of Pakistan, capture maximum sensitive Indian territory.
 - b. **Leading Hypothesis.** The leading Hypothesis envisaged India remaining strategically on the defensive in the Western Theatre till completion of operations in the Eastern Theatre. However, they were expected to remain tactically on the offensive to fix our forces. Their main defensive effort was visualized to be in Ravi-Chenab Corridor.
 - c. **Scheme of Operations**
 - (1) **Fixation.** Fix the Indian Army all along the front by holding formations. Relatively strong attacks were to be launched in Poonch, Chhamb and Desert Sectors, with a view to creating imbalance by drawing enemy Strategic Reserves away to facilitate launching of counter offensive.
 - (2) **Offensive by 2 Corps.** The offensive by 2 Corps was planned between Anupgarh and Ganganagar with the objective of capturing area up to and including Bhatinda-Ludhiana to relieve pressure on the Eastern Theatre and improve bargaining position.
 - (3) **Defensive Balance.** Potent reserve of an Armoured Division and Infantry Division was placed at Gujranwala to maintain strategic balance.

Conduct of Operation Eastern Theatre

25. **Visualisation.** Apparently, it seemed that the military action of March 1971 had achieved the stipulated aims and situation appeared to be under control. However, this was the period in which Indians were unfolding a very well planned and meticulously executed three-pronged military strategy against Pakistan. The three-pronged strategy included reinforcing Pakistani perception of the real and main threat from Mukti Bahini and not the Indian Armed Forces in the Eastern Theatre (which was seemingly under control through the prevailing calm after military action). *Secondly*, India wanted Pakistan to adopt a forward defensive posture to prevent declaring small portion of captured territory as Bangladesh

and *thirdly* to prevent Pakistan from shifting of forces, thus, denying the advantage of being on interior lines in Eastern Theatre, through simultaneous engagement in all sectors. Indians also used this period to build up their forces, develop communications and organise Mukti Bahini into an effective force. Mukti Bahini, with active Indian support, stepped up their activities by the end of October/early November. It was, indeed, the beginning of operations in East Pakistan. Operations in East Pakistan can be divided into three distinct phases i.e. preliminary operations (up to 20 November), battle of the salients/frontiers (20 November to 4 December) and the main offensive (4 December to 15 December).

26. **South-Western Sector**

- a. **Pakistan Deployment.** 9 Division was defending 600 Kilometers with two regular and an adhoc brigades. 57 Brigade with three regular battalions was responsible for Northern half i.e. Jhenida Sub-Sector, 107 Brigade with three regular battalions guarding Southern half i.e. Jessore Sub-Sector and 314 Adhoc Brigade of East Pakistan irregulars was deployed at Khulna.
- b. **Indian Offensive.** Indian 2 Corps had begun operations on 21/22 November, before war was declared and secured lodgements within Pakistani territory at Garibpur and Darsana.
 - (1) **Jessore-Khulna Sub-Sector**
 - (a) Indian 9 Division broke out from secured Garibpur lodgement, reached Afra Nullah 11 Kilometers west of Jessore and exerted pressure on 107 Brigade defences. Commander 107 Brigade sought permission to pull back and occupy Jessore fortress to avoid piecemeal destruction but was denied the permission.
 - (b) There was a stalemate in the battle from 29 November to 5 December. 9 Division moved inexorably east and Jessore was vacated on 6 December, which was occupied by Indians on 7 December.
 - (c) Pakistani 9 Division not only failed to reinforce Jhenida, but also vacated

Jessore the strongest fortress in East Pakistan. Division Headquarters fell back to Magura and crossed Madhumati River. 107 Brigade withdrew to Daulatpur north of Khulna, whereas, according to plan the Brigade was to occupy Magura.

- (d) Indian 9 Division was to send a force to Magura after capture of Jessore to reinforce 4 Mountain Division for Faridpur, rather whole of the Division moved towards Khulna on a narrow front and kept on busy fighting around Daulatpur until ceasefire.
- (2) **Jhenida Sub-Sector**
 - (a) Commander 57 Brigade was defending this sub-sector but failed to determine the Indian axis of advance due to lack of information and concentrated his force around Chuadanga.
 - (b) Whereas, Indian 4 Mountain Division broke out from Darsana lodgement against Jhenida on 5 December. Indian instead of capturing Kaliganj and advancing towards Jhenida, the Division manoeuvred northward.
 - (c) A battalion and armour squadron established road block between Chaudanga and Jhenida.
 - (d) 57 Brigade sought permission to occupy Jhenida with 18 Punjab. Late permission was accorded for occupation of Jhenida and the battalion could be deployed.
 - (e) On 6 December, 57 Brigade was ordered to withdraw to Magura. The brigade could not make the headway through blocking position and instead it moved north of Kushtia on 8 December. Jhenida was also vacated without fight. Later the Brigade under heavy pressure crossed Ganges over

Hardinge Bridge remained deployed until ceasefire.

- (f) Headquarters 9 Division created a Task Force and dispatched it to Kaliganj. The force did not fight any battle until it withdrew to Magura and later to Faridpur with Division Headquarters.
- (g) 4 Mountain Division instead of pressing across Madhumati diverted to Kushtia and Hardinge Bridge. However, it reverted towards its actual direction towards Faridpur on 13 December but could not cross Padma River.

27. **North-Western Sector**

- a. **Pakistan Deployment.** 16 Division was defending this sector with three regular and an adhoc brigades. 23 Brigade was deployed in the north at Rangpur-Dinajpur areas, 205 Brigade guarding western borders at Bogra area, 34 Brigade was covering southern half at Nator/Pabna areas and further south was 96 Adhoc Brigade at Rajshahi area, covering ravine operations.
- b. **Indian Offensive.** Indian 33 Corps undertook preliminary operations well before the outbreak of hostilities on 3 December.
- c. **Hilli Sub-Sector**
 - (1) 20 Mountain Division launched main offensive of 33 Corps against Hilli area, where Indians had been pressing 205 Brigade since September and further intensified their activities in November.
 - (2) Repeated attacks were launched against Hilli position from 21 November to 3 December but failed to make any headway. Indian changed their plan and on 8 December, they outflanked with infantry and armour from north of Hilli and were successful in capturing Pirganj on Bogra-Rangpur Road on 9 December and Gaibanda on 10 December. Securing the waistline at Pirganj-Gaibanda

isolated 23 Brigade in Dinajpur-Rangpur areas.

- (3) Counter attack on Pirganj was ordered but could not be launched, thus, allowing the enemy to increase strength and alter force ratio considerably. After clearing Pirganj, enemy turned south in order to cut the route of withdrawal of Hilli area.
- (4) 34 Brigade was re-deployed north of Bogra on 8 December. Enemy presence at Pirganj-Palasbari on Bogra-Rangpur Road had an unsettling effect and, consequently, 205 Brigade had to be pulled back close to Bogra on 11 December.
- (5) After capturing Palasbari on 9 December, the enemy contacted Bogra defence and by 14 December succeeded in establishing a roadblock behind Bogra. The enemy finally attacked Bogra on 15 December and the fight went on, when instructions for surrender were received from Eastern Command.
- (6) At this juncture, 23 Brigade was holding out at Rangpur-Dinajpur-Saidpur, 205 Brigade was fighting in Bogra and elements of 34 Brigade were in Rajshahi.

28. **Rangpur Sub-Sector**

- a. In the north, Indians advanced from Mirgarh and occupied Titalya Bulge, thus, secured Siliguri gap the only road link between West Bengal and Assam.
- b. Indian forces reached upto Thakurgoan on 3rd December but then paused for six days allowing the defenders to re-organise defences. 23 Brigade managed to occupy fortresses of Rangpur, Dinajpur and Saidpur effectively until the ceasefire ordered.

29. **Northern Sector**

- a. **Pakistan Deployment.** 36 Adhoc Division was tasked to delay the Indian advance to Dacca in this sector. The Division was covering the frontage of about 180 kilometres with only two regular infantry battalions grouped under 93 Adhoc Brigade. Battalions were deployed along the border to guard main approaches to Dacca with the aim to delay the advance as long as possible to trade space for time

and fall back to Mymensingh and Jamalpur fortresses.

b. **Indian Offensive**

- (1) 101 Communication Zone launched offensive in the north along main approaches. Border outpost at Kamalpur was cleared after hard fighting over two weeks, but was finally vacated on 4/5 December. Brigade defences were re-organized by pulling back the other battalion along Mymensingh-Jamalpur line. Jamalpur was repeatedly attacked without success. 93 Brigade was ordered on 10 December to withdraw and deploy on the inner periphery of Dacca.
- (2) 33 Punjab left Mymensingh position at 2100 hours and reached Madhupur Junction without encountering any resistance. However, 31 Baloch at Jamalpur could not disengage in time because their route of withdrawal had been cut. The brigade headquarters along with one battalion moved towards South. The brigade was engaged by Mukti Bahini in Tangail area, the force was scattered and could not re-organise themselves. Elements of Jamalpur battalion also started trickling back towards Tangail in disorganized way.
- (3) Indians dropped a para battalion at Tangail, to isolate Dacca from north, give impetus to the operation and prevent troops falling back to Dacca. The drop was facilitated by the Mukti Bahini already operating in Tangail area. On 14 December, Commander 93 Adhoc Brigade was taken prisoner. A few elements of 93 Brigade, however, did manage to reach Dacca on 13/14 December, in a highly disorganised manner.
- (4) Indian troops, advancing southward, linked up with the para battalion on 14 December and moved to Dacca, bypassing whatever little resistance was encountered. The leading elements of Indian forces reached outskirts of Dacca on 16 December.

30. **Eastern Sector (Sylhet-Brahman Baria-Chittagong)**
- a. **Pakistani Deployment**
- (1) **39 Adhoc Division.** The division with Headquarters at Chandpur had two regular and two adhoc brigades for the defence of Comilla-Chittagong areas.
- (a) 117 Brigade at Comilla-Laksham.
- (b) 53 Brigade was defending area around Feni-Belonia.
- (c) 91 Adhoc Brigade was looking after area to the North of Chittagong.
- (d) 97 Adhoc Brigade was at Chittagong.
- (2) **14 Division.** The division with two regular and one adhoc brigades was tasked to defend area between Sylhet to Comilla, while denying Sylhet and Bhairab Bazar at all costs.
- (a) 27 Brigade was defending area just North of Comilla.
- (b) 313 Brigade was covering the central area.
- (c) 202 Adhoc Brigade was defending Sylhet.
- b. **Indian Offensive.** Indian 4 Corps at Agartala had three full strength mountain divisions and eight Bangladeshi battalions. 4 Corps plan envisaged investment of Sylhet by 8 Division, 23 Division to capture Chandpur and 57 Division to capture Daudkandi.
- c. **Brahman Baria Sub-Sector-27 Brigade**
- (1) Indians launched main offensive on night 28/29 November with a simultaneous thrust against 27 and 313 Brigades. By 30 November, elements of 57 Indian Division managed to penetrate the forward defences of 27 Brigade through the inter battalion gap. The brigade held out for six days before falling back to Brahman Baria. On 6 December, 27 Brigade had to fall back to Ashuganj on the Eastern bank of Meghna.
- (2) Indians tried desperately to encircle HQ 14 Division along with 27 Brigade and capture all the bridges intact before these could cross over to Bhairab Bazar but failed. 27 Brigade

along with HQ 14 Division safely crossed over the Meghna to Bhairab Bazar on night 10/11 December, destroying a few spans of the bridge on their way.

- (3) While 27 Brigade was organising its defences at Bhairab Bazar, enemy dropped battalion size force behind 27 Brigade, establishing a blocking position between Bhairab Bazar and Narsingdi to prevent withdrawal of the brigade to Dacca. This helicopter borne force was not interfered with by 14 Division or 27 Brigade.

d. **Maulvi Bazar Sub-Sector-313 Brigade**

- (1) 57 Mountain Division attacked 313 Brigade and captured Ashuganj by 5 December. After holding enemy for four days on the borders, the Brigade concentrated around Maulvi Bazar on 3 December. Indians despite their full efforts could not dislodge the brigade till 8/9 December.
- (2) On 6 December sensing the likely collapse of 27 Brigade and threatening security of Dacca, 313 Brigade was ordered to link up with 27 Brigade but 313 Brigade failed to do so. Later, on night 8/9 December, 313 Brigade was ordered to move back to Bhairab Bazar but moved to Sylhet against the orders. The brigade remained at Sylhet till surrender was announced.
- (3) Visualizing the development, 57 Division was tasked to move towards Maulvi Bazar to facilitate 23 Mountain Division. An effort was also sent to clear Daudkandi.

e. **Sylhet Sector-202 Adhoc Brigade**

- (1) Indian 8 Mountain Division was ordered to clear the region around Sylhet and advance on Maulvi Bazar. Indian pushed back border outposts and carried out cross border operations in November and began its advance on 2 December. The division was held up at Kalaura till 6 December.

- (2) On 5 December Munshi Bazar was lost and by 7 December after heavy resistance Maulvi Bazar was isolated.
- (3) Sylhet was fortified and held by 202 Adhoc Brigade and 313 Brigade reinforced it.
- (4) Indian battalion was dropped East of Sylhet on 7 December. No attempt was made by Pakistani troops to eliminate this force.
- (5) Indian ground column linked up with the helicopter borne force on 13 December. Sylhet was surrounded and isolated and finally surrendered on 17 December.

f. **Comilla-Chandpur Sub-Sector - 117 and 53 Brigades**

- (1) Lalmai Hills area between Laksham-Comilla was defended by 117 Brigade and 53 Brigade defending Belonia and Feni.
- (2) After preparatory operations in November to secure firm bases, Indians began main attacks on 3 December. 23 Mountain Division mounted attacks south of Comilla.
- (3) 53 Brigade vacated Belonia Salient due to Indian pressure on 26 November. The troops withdrew to Feni. Due to Indian main thrust towards Laksham and Chandpur thus posing a threat to Dacca, it was decided to abandon the Feni. Consequently, 53 Brigade joined 117 Brigade at Laksham.
- (4) Indians avoided pitched battle at Laksham and pushed forward for Chandpur.
- (5) Indians captured Hajiganj on 8 December while remnants of the division were surrounded in Laksham and Comilla. Chandpur was evacuated on night 6/7 December and 39 Adhoc Division Headquarter with its remnants crossed the Meghna River and moved to Dacca.
- (6) Elements of 53 and 117 Brigades were still holding Laksham against repeated enemy ground and air attacks.
- (7) The Comilla fortress now had two brigades (about two battalions size force). Though Comilla city was captured by Indians on 8

- December, the garrison held out till surrender of Dacca on 16 December.
- (8) By 9 December, Meghna Bulge was secured areas including Ashuganj, Daudkandi and Chandpur.
- g. **91 and 97 Adhoc Brigades.** 91 and 97 Adhoc Brigades at Karar Hat and Chittagong Hill Tracts were not engaged decisively. The Indians disregarded their existence as they were far away from the strategic direction of Dacca.
- h. **Operational Situation Prior to Surrender**
Operational situation prior to surrender was as follows:-
- (1) **9 Division.** Situation was as under:
 - (a) 57 Brigade had crossed over to Hardinge Bridge on Ganges River.
 - (b) 107 Brigade was around Khulna in defence and had managed to keep the enemy at bay.
 - (2) **16 Division.** It was decisively cut into two. Situation was as under:
 - (a) 34 Brigade was intact and so was Headquarters 16 Division at Natore.
 - (b) Fortresses of Dinajpur, Rangpur and Saidpur were still intact.
 - (3) **14 Division.** It was contained in Sylhet and Bhairab Bazar and its command structure as well as combat power was intact.
 - (4) **39 Adhoc Division.** The formation was ceased to exist as a coherent force.
 - (5) **36 Adhoc Division.** The lone 93 Brigade of this formation was scattered, while withdrawing to Dacca.
 - (6) Enemy was, however, still out of Dacca Bowl. There was only a helicopter borne company in Narsingdi and a Para Battalion in Tangail area.
 - (7) Additional ground forces were required by the Indians, if they were to threaten Dacca. Build up of troops required construction of bridges or river crafts to transport tanks and other heavy weapons over the rivers. They

would have required minimum one week to accomplish all this.

31. **The Surrender**

- a. On 14 December the President of Pakistan authorised Governor East Pakistan and Commander Eastern Command to stop the fighting to save human lives.
- b. On 16 December in the afternoon, Lieutenant General Niazi signed the instrument of surrender. The whole country went into mourning. Officers and the men mourned.

Conduct of Operations - Western Theatre

32. **Kashmir and Northern Areas**

- a. **Northern Areas.** In the far north, the Ceasefire Line was thinly held by lightly armed Gilgit Scouts. Indian Ladakh Scouts and 3 Infantry Division took 36 Gilgit Scout posts and occupied 225 square kilometres of territory.
- b. **Poonch Sub-Sector.** 12 Division was to capture Poonch area and simulate limited offensive in order to fix Indian forces and prevent them reinforcing elsewhere. 12 Division launched an attack with two Brigades on 4 December and managed to reach their objectives. 26 Brigade tried to link up with Special Services Group company which had infiltrated earlier. The link was denied through Indian counter attack, supported by IAF. Line of communication of assaulting troops was overstretched and threatened, therefore, the impetus of attack was lost, Pakistani forces were driven back and Indians regained the territory.
- c. **Chhamb Sub-Sector**
 - (1) 23 Division was tasked to clear the enemy upto River Tawi. Two additional infantry brigades i.e. 66 and 111 Brigades, along with one armoured brigade, reinforced 23 Division. The plan was to capture Mandiala crossing over River Tawi from the north to threaten Jaurian, inducing the fall of Chhamb by itself. The operation was launched on night 3/4 December which initially made steady progress but then was held up against stiff resistance, which resulted in a stalemate.

- (2) The Divisional Commander pulled back 2 Armoured Brigade and 111 Infantry Brigade in the morning of 6 December, and after a quick re-grouping attacked between Munawar and Chhamb and reached River Tawi. Chhamb Complex was secured by 7 December and a foothold across River Tawi established which though was later eliminated on 10 December by the Indians.

33. **Sialkot Sector**

- a. 1 Corps, holding this sector with 15 Division in Sialkot and 8 Division in Shakargarh, was assigned the following tasks:
 - (1) Defend Ravi-Chenab Corridor as far forward as tactically feasible, ensuring denial of Marala Headworks, main towns and crossing over River Tawi.
 - (2) Capture Dharam Enclave on outbreak of hostilities.
 - (3) Simulate offensive action in order to draw enemy forces into Shakargarh area to create favourable situation for launching of counter offensive.
- b. On night 3 December Dharam Enclave was captured.
- c. Indian 1 Corps was tasked to capture Tanda, Marala, Sialkot, Pasrur and Narowal. Thereafter, the Corps was to advance upto Marala-Ravi Link Canal and attempt breakout towards Wazirabad and from Tanda towards Gujrat. Indian offensive to achieve these objectives commenced on 5 December as under:-
 - (1) 54 Infantry Division launched main attack in Shakargarh Bulge from the north between Bein River and Degh Nadi.
 - (2) 10 Division attacked Phukhlean Salient from the east and captured it against light resistance offered by Rangers. Enemy reached within 1500 yards of the Headworks, however, Marala Headworks was saved.
- d. Pakistani covering troops bought sufficient time for the main defences which were eventually contacted on 9 December. The operation was progressing favourably from military point of view, as 1 Corps

had sucked in substantial part of Indian offensive effort into Shakargarh Salient. But, on 9 December, 36 Indian Division supported by 2 Indian Armoured Brigade attacked astride Gurdaspur-Nainakot and Gurdaspur-Ikhlaspur towards Shakargarh.

- e. Pakistani 8 Armoured Brigade launched a counter attack against Indian concentration across Bein River, which was later called off and troops ordered to organise defence west of Bein. On night 15/16 December, Indians attacked across the minefield in Baghwal-Zafarwal sub-sector, enlarged the gap upto Bara Pind area and built up two armour regiments and two infantry battalions in the bridgehead. On the morning of 16 December counter attack launched by 13 Lancers frontally to prevent the Indian breakout proved very costly. On 17 December, attack launched by 35 FF to recapture Jarpal, proved disastrous because it was launched without adequate planning, preparations and prior reconnaissance.

34. **Lahore-Sulaimanke Sector**

- a. 4 Corps was defending area from Maqboolpur to Southeast of Bahawalpur. The corps was given the task of limited offensive action to seize features of tactical importance to improve its defensive posture. On 3 December, both 10 and 11 Divisions launched their attacks in Lahore and Kasur Sectors respectively and 105 Brigade in Sulaimanke.
- b. 10 Division straightened out all the bulges within its area of responsibility. Similarly, 11 Division captured small enemy territory to straighten out defences. On 4 December, 106 Brigade captured Hussainiwala Enclave alongwith an area of about 18 square miles. 105 Brigade in Sulaimanke attacked and captured bridges over Sabuna Drain.
- c. The Indians captured Shajra Salient in Kasur area.

35. **Rajasthan Sector**

- a. 18 Division was tasked to hold the enemy in the Central and Southern Sectors and launch an attack in the Northern Sector with two brigades supported by two armour regiments against Ramgarh. The attack was launched on 4 December, but immediately after the attack was launched, all communications with the Divisional Headquarters broke down and

progress of the operation could not be ascertained till 1030 hours on 5 December. Initially, some progress was made, but thereafter the situation started worsening. A large number of vehicles got bogged down in the sand. Radio communication failed and units started facing acute shortage of ammunition, water and petrol. One column, which was assigned to go elsewhere, succeeded in capturing Longanewala, six miles inside India. Enemy air got active during the day, destroying 18 tanks apart from other equipment and vehicles. On 6 December, the formation was ordered to withdraw.

- b. The Indians launched an attack on Khokhrapar Axis and pushed back the feeble opposition of Rangers. By 6 December, Indians occupied area about 40 miles deep in the Central Sector upto Chachro. Chhor was contacted on 7 December. In Southern Sector also, the Indians made significant tactical gains by occupying Nagar Parkar area. In view of the desperate situation, a brigade ex-33 Division was moved to Chhor on 10 December.

36. **Counter Offensive**

- a. A counter offensive with 2 Corps, comprising 1 Armoured Division, 7 Division and 33 Division, was planned to be launched south of Sutlej between Ganga Nagar and Anupgarh, with the objective of capturing area upto Bhatinda and Ludhiana. The operation, however, could not materialise.
- b. The preliminary operations were aimed at creating favourable conditions for the launching of counter offensive, which implied displacement and commitment of Indian 1 Armoured Division, located around Muktasar.
- c. By 7 December the preliminary operations had created whatever effect these were capable of. The attack on Poonch though failed but it succeeded in fixing the enemy formations there. 23 Division in the Chhamb Sector had been successful in capturing all its objectives and contacting River Tawi. 1 Corps in Sialkot had lost the Phukhlean Salient, however, three Indian Divisions were committed here. While 4 Corps had captured all its limited objectives. 18 Division in Rajasthan had suffered a setback and

- withdrawn to its prepared positions, but had nevertheless induced caution on the enemy.
- d. Indian 1 Armoured Division was still uncommitted in Kot Kapura and Muktasar area. This was the most crucial time for our troops in East Pakistan.
- (1) It is a widely held view that the offensive could not be launched due to unnecessary delay and over cautious approach.
 - (2) With splitting of 33 Division, the plan was revised to secure area upto twin canals short of Bhatinda. On 14 December, the decision was finally taken to launch the counter offensive. On the same day the decision for surrender had also been taken. Artillery, engineer battalions and two armour units moved across Sutlej for the purpose, but on 16 December the operation was called off.

PART-III

NAVAL OPERATIONS

Introduction

1. The naval campaign of Indo-Pak War of 1971 is of considerable interest as it witnessed first ever use of surface to surface missiles at sea to engage shipping. It also saw first successful submarine attack on a surface ship since the Second World War. The employment of Indian Navy on the Bay of Bengal provided an example for effective use of naval forces in support of land campaign. The deployment of American Carrier Battle Group centred on the USS ENTERPRISE, is a demonstration of the very real limits of naval power, when attempts to influence a state, which does not have to rely on the sea to achieve strategic aims.
2. India had been able to develop a balanced navy, after humiliation during 1965 War and was able to very effectively use its sea power during 1971 War, to pursue its strategic objectives. Contrary to that, the development of Pakistan Navy was neglected to some extent and the shortcomings greatly hampered the achievement of the objectives assigned. Pakistan Navy was forced into opting for a purely defensive strategy, barring the offensive employment of the potent submarine force.
3. The deterioration of law and order situation, especially in the border towns of East Pakistan adjoining India paved the way for Indian intervention in support of politically deprived people of East Pakistan. This phenomenon gave birth to insurgency all across East Pakistan for which the then military government was not prepared at all. The covert planning for outright war seems to have begun around March 1971, although measures were already in hand to assist the east Pakistani insurgents (*Mukti Bahinis*). Resultantly, stage was set for a full fledged war, the important aspects of which have just been presented before you. This part shall limit the war at sea or naval operations only.

Pre-War Development

4. Ever since the debacle of 1965 War, India laid correct emphasis on development of forces required for defence at sea and to fight naval battles far away from its shores. It is for this very reason that we see a *balanced navy* developing in a short time frame. On the other hand, Pakistan continued to live in the past glory and paid insufficient attention to developing maritime forces, the need for the same was even more predominant than the Indians.
5. The budget allocation for Indian Navy grew from Rs. 350 millions to 1150 millions, which was more than 300% increase. Not

only that the naval facilities were developed on the East Coast, the naval fleet underwent rapid expansion. In that it acquired from erstwhile USSR the platforms like:

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|---|
| a. | OSA-I class missile boats | 8 |
| b. | Foxtrot Class S/M | 4 |
| c. | Frigates Petya Class | 6 |
| d. | FPB Poluchat class | 5 |
| e. | Landing craft Polnochny class | 4 |
6. This increase in Indian naval inventory allowed Indians to create 2 Fleet Navy; one for the Bay of Bengal and the other for the Arabian Sea. Structural changes were also made in the command organization. Three operational naval commands i.e. Western Naval Command at Bombay, Southern Naval Command at Cochin and Eastern Naval Command at Vishakhapatnam were created.
7. On the contrary, Pakistan Navy remained ill equipped to meet the fast expanding multi-dimensional threat environment. The efforts of Naval Headquarters to persuade the government for additional funds did not bear fruit, rather meagre PN budget remained static i.e. less than 200 millions, (160.25 millions – 1969-70), which was barely enough to pay for the instalments of 3 submarines acquired between 1967 - 71.
8. Consequently, the US and Western embargoes on Pakistan and USSR's open support to India forced Pakistan Navy to continue to rely on its antiquated weaponry and platforms of Second World War vintage, which were in a low operational state. Only three new Daphne Class Submarines constituted the offensive arm of the Navy.

Area of Naval Operations

9. The study of area of operation reveals that:
- | | |
|----|--|
| a. | The two parts of Pakistan i.e. East and West were separated by roughly 1600 kilometers of hostile territory. |
| b. | The air as flights having been banned by India left only one route to support operations in East Pakistan, i.e., <i>through the Sea</i> . |
| c. | The 3000 miles long Sea Lines of Communications (SLOCs) running between East and West Pakistan were vulnerable to disruption by Indian Naval and Air forces. |
| d. | Karachi was the only port available in West Pakistan. |

- e. East Pakistan had two deep-water ports at Chittagong and Chalna but within easy reach of Indian Naval forces.
- f. Inland waterways available in East Pakistan were well established.
- g. India had numerous ports to operate freely.
- h. Generally, the sea weather and overall oceanographic conditions were favourable for all types of Naval Operations.
- j. On west coast of India, the depth gradient is / was generally unfavourable for anti-surface operations by the submarines.
- k. Bay of Bengal, length of East Pakistan coast line
- l. Sea Lines of Communication
- m. Deployment of Indian and Pakistan's main combatants

Situation at Sea

- 10. The situation at sea was:
 - a. The large naval units stationed in East Pakistan were recalled to Karachi during April – July 1971.
 - b. PNS/M GHAZI was deployed in eastern theatre to interdict Indian Naval carrier, targets of opportunity and for offensive mining off Vishakhapatnam port.
 - c. The sea trade was flowing as normal; however, India had imposed restriction on Pakistan through its air corridor.
 - d. Mukti Bahani were conducting attacks on Eastern Pakistani ports and to disrupt supply lines to widely dispersed army units
 - e. Indian Navy re-organized her ships/submarines into eastern and western fleet and transferred Aircraft carrier into eastern fleet.
 - f. On the eve of Indian invasion of East Pakistan on 21 November 1971, the strength of Pakistan Navy under the command of Rear Admiral Sharif in East was virtually non-existent. Four gun boats at Chittagong faced an aircraft carrier supported by Destroyers, and submarine of the Indian Navy in the Bay of Bengal.
 - g. Most of the Bengali had fled and those who were left had been taken out from the duties resulting into critical shortage in all branches. Most importantly it was a security hazard.

- h. India had inducted 28 ships/submarines including Missile Boats since 1965, whereas, PN had inducted only three submarines.
- j. When hostilities broke out, Pakistan Navl ships under the command of Rear Admiral Lodhi were either at Karachi or Gadani anchorage.
- k. PN only came to know about the commencement of war in Western front from the 1700 hours news Bulletin of Radio Pakistan. It was the state of inter-services planning and coordination.

Comparison of Forces

11. The relative strength of the two opposing navies during the 1971 war was as under:

Type	Pakistan	India	Ratio
Manpower	8000	40000	1:5
Surface Forces			
Cruisers	1	2	1:2
Destroyers	5	3	1:1.2
Frigates/Corvettes	2	14+5 Petyas	1:9.5 (1:3)
Tankers	1	2	1:2
Mine Sweepers	8	8	1:1
Mine Layers	-	4	0:4
Torpedo Boats	-	6	0:6
Missile Boats	-	6	0:6
Gun Boats	4	15	1:4.9
Landing Ships	-	2	0:2 (1:4)
Naval Aviation			
A/C Carrier	-	1	0:1
Sea Hawks	-	24	0:24
Alize	-	12	0:12
Seaking	-	02	0:2
ALT III	-	10	0:10
Subsurface			
Submarines	4	4	1:1
Midgets	6	-	6:0

12. The comparison of forces reveals that:
- a. Indian Navy:
 - (1) Enjoyed overall supremacy, both qualitatively and quantitatively.
 - (2) Her centre of gravity was Aircraft carrier.
 - (3) There was complete Indian air superiority at sea.
 - (4) Possessed surface to surface missiles.
 - (5) Possessed amphibious capability.
 - (6) Could exercise Total Sea Control in Bay of Bengal and Blockade against Karachi.
 - b. On the other hand, Pakistan Navy:
 - (1) Its centre of gravity was her submarines, which was also a qualitative edge over Indians.
 - (2) The Seaward defence was almost non-existent due to absence of air surveillance and requisite surface ships
 - (3) There was total reliance for air cover on PAF.
 - (4) PN had no defence at sea/ harbour/ POL installations against missile threat.

Strengths and Weaknesses

13. Pakistan Navy was pitched against a force several times greater in size and far stronger in terms of capabilities. The qualitative and structural factors also weighed heavily in favour of the Indian Navy. The strengths and weaknesses of two Navies were:

14. **India**
- a. Indians appeared to be well prepared for the war. They had prepared and examined the plans of various commands of three services in detail. India's assessment of the Pakistan's maritime capability and PN intentions were also substantially correct.
 - b. Indian Navy had plans to overcome their shortcomings. These were:
 - (1) Towing techniques for OSAs to likely scene of action at high seas were devised.
 - (2) VIKRANT was deployed in Bay of Bengal, away from PN submarine threat. The deployment was well planned as Indians had already upgraded the Vishakhapatnam docking facilities for the old troublesome carrier. Machinery limitations of VIKRANT were covered by exploiting weather.

- (3) VIKRANT machinery was not in good speed. Her 1 out of 4 boilers was non operational, thus, not giving enough steam to operate Catapult as well as give her required speed to launch/ recovery of aircraft. She was barely able to achieve 16 knots only when open sea room was available. This was a technical limitation to operate the Carrier. Due to PN submarine threat in Western Theatre, the freedom of movement to carrier was not sure, hence, Indian Navy deployed Carrier in the Eastern Theatre. This enabled them to operate freely, especially when only threat GHAZI also diminished right on the onset of war.
- (4) Vishakapatnum was considered as home port for VIKRANT. However, Indian Navy kept the carrier at Nicobar Island prior to opening of hostilities, approximate 1000 miles away from home port, to counter the Ghazi Threat. This tactical decision paid off and Ghazi although deployed to hunt and track the Carrier in or around Vishakapatnam, could not do so.
- (5) To counter PN submarines threat against merchantmen, Indian opted for evasive routing in the west. Naval units were advised to stay close to coast, where submarine possibility was least in shallow waters. ASW resources were concentrated in approaches to Mumbai.
- c. OSA MBs gave Indian an edge early in the war and became weapon of surprise. Although, relatively new in Indian naval inventory, but Indian Navy planners gave them special work up at high seas including live missile firing off Bombay harbour after arrival from USSR in early 1971 to ensure their fullest use in case of war.
- d. Indian Navy achieved very high level of operational readiness just prior to the war.
- e. Indian Navy concentrated on intensive training and work up programme.

14. **Pakistan.** Pakistan Navy was not adequately ready for war because:

- a. Pakistan's naval war plans were revised in May 1970, after General Yahya Khan took over. These plans were further updated and became the large framework for naval operations in 1971 War. However, they were made in isolation with very little input of the other two services.
- b. PN surface fleet was of old vintage and was not in good operational state. Its sea-going and fighting capabilities were quite unsatisfactory.
- c. Pakistan Navy had already exhausted its stamina for almost over three months of deployment prior to commencement of war in December (i.e since 15 September 1971).
- d. PN newly inducted Italian Midget's inability to launch torpedoes ruled out the possible surprise to Indian Navy during war.
- e. Exploitation of geographic separation of two Wings was taken as a disadvantage by PN planners. However, the same could have been turned into advantage by careful planning and deployment of naval units.
- f. Pakistan Navy had virtually no defense against missile attack.
- g. Absence of Naval Air Arm with Pakistan created a total black out from early warning of threat coming from sea. This provided Indian the opportunity to move freely close to Pakistan coast without fear of air threat.
- h. PN newly expanded submarine force was formidable threat for Indians. However, endurance of Daphnes had limitations on their deployment in Western Theatre, i.e. around Bombay.

15. **Indian Naval Strategy.** Indian Naval strategy was derived from national objectives. It visualized absolute control over Bay of Bengal. This was to be achieved through blockade, destruction or damaging of PN assets, afloat or ashore and destruction of merchant fleet both inbound and outbound. Indian Naval strategy was primarily offensive-defensive and aimed at exploiting the geographically disadvantageous Pakistan. Based on the IN strategy, the tasks of IN fleet was to:

- a. Protect Indian ports and shipping.
 - b. Neutralize Pakistan Naval forces in East Pakistan
 - c. Disrupt sea borne communication to and from both Wings of Pakistan.
 - d. The containment and, if possible, the destruction of Pakistan Navy.
16. Both Eastern and Western Commands also came out with their own aim and objectives. Therefore, Eastern Command framed their aim as:

“To destroy the enemy’s maritime forces deployed in support of military operations in East Bengal and to deny all sustenance from reaching the enemy. As a corollary, any movement out of East Bengal from sea must be prevented”¹
17. The objectives of Indian Navy in Eastern theatre were:
 - a. Destruction / neutralization of airfields at Chittagong and Cox’s Bazar.
 - b. Bombardment on East Pakistani ports to destroy or damage port installations and ships.
 - c. Bombardment of riverine traffic to disrupt logistic supplies to Pakistan Army units.
 - d. Bombardment of troop concentrations in support of Indian Army operations in coastal areas.
 - e. Amphibious landing, if required, to support Indian Army.
18. On the other hand, Indian intentions on the Western front can be well described by the message of Admiral S M Nanda, Indian Navy Chief to Western Command, on the eve of war as:

“Seek and destroy all enemy warships. The maritime link between the two wings of the enemy is to be sliced forthwith. Ensure that no, repeat no supplies reach the Pakistan war machine from seawards”²
19. The main thrust of Western Command Plan in view of national objectives and guidelines set by the NHQ was:
 - a. To engage and destroy PN units.
 - b. To deny any chance to PN to interfere with Indian SLOCs or to mount any bombardment on Indian soil.
 - c. To attack Karachi and to carryout bombardment of Gwadar and Pasni and along the coast.
 - d. To institute blockade of Karachi.
 - e. To render ineffective the East – West SLOCs.

¹ V/Admiral N Krishnan, (C-in-C Indian Navy Eastern Command) in “No Way but Surrender

² India Official History of Indo-Pak War 1971

- f. Undertake commerce warfare against Pakistan
- g. Ensure full protection to own shipping.

Pakistan

20. **Pakistan's Strategic Objectives.** Based on the main strategic concept of National Defence, as given in the war directive No.4, which states that: "the defence of East lies in the West, and the major and decisive battles would be fought from West Pakistan even if the hostilities commenced in East Pakistan", PN devised defensive-offensive strategy.

21. **PN Strategy.** It was an accepted fact that PN was not in a position to maintain SLOCs between the two halves of the country due to limited resources. The naval war would have to be fought, therefore, by using available stockpiles only. PN was forced to resort to the Fleet-in-being strategy. Only submarines were deployed in the offensive roles. Major surface combatants were to avoid direct contact with the enemy till such time the missile threat from the OSAs could be minimized. In the East, smaller combatants were deployed close to the coast and in rivers primarily in support of the Army. PN was not allowed to engage merchant shipping. Pakistan Navy was forced into opting for a purely defensive strategy.

22. The main thrust of the PN Concept of Operations was defensive. The mission of Pakistan Navy in the event of war was visualized as a very limited one and included:

- a. Seaward defence of Port of Karachi, Chittagong and Chalna.
- b. Limited protection of merchant shipping from the Persian Gulf to West Pakistan, thus, ensuring safety of selective SLOC only.
- c. Evade Naval blockade.
- d. Interdiction of enemy ships and submarines.
- e. Support to Army in riverine operation in East Pakistan.

23. The PN Eastern Fleet derived following *roles and tasks from PN mission*:

- a. Support of army units in execution of their operations.
- b. Provision of gunfire support to the deployed troops.
- c. Ensuring safe routes for the movement of logistics and personnel through the coasts and adjoining rivers and waterways.
- d. Defence of harbours, ports and their infrastructure.

24. The Pakistan Flotilla Commander derived following roles and tasks from PN mission:-

- a. Maintain 'Fleet in being'.
- b. Deploy submarines in offensive role.
- c. Interdiction of merchant ships not allowed.

Conduct of War

25. Eastern Theatre

- a. **Support to Land Operations.** In East Pakistan, Pakistan Navy was committed with the Army in the counter insurgency operation, which was launched on 26 March 1971. The support was mostly limited to riverine operations, only small gunboats were deployed. Prior to the outbreak of hostilities, the strength of Pakistan Navy in East was virtually non-existent, severely limiting it in providing any seaward defence. Only four gunboats were left at Chittagong against Indian fleet in Bay of Bengal, comprising aircraft carrier, Destroyers and submarines.
- b. **Seaward Defence of Chalna and Chittagong Ports.** Despite its preponderance, Indian Navy could not capture Chittagong directly as its approaches had been intelligently mined by the Pakistan Navy on 7 December 1971. Mining was resorted to in the virtual absence of any air cover and surface ships to do any meaningful seaward defence. This mining proved quite effective, as it denied Indian forces direct access to the port even after the war was over.
- c. **Employment of PNS/M Ghazi.** Dispatch of Ghazi to India's eastern seaboard was not part of the original plan but was taken as a step to reinforce Eastern Command and to pose a direct threat to Indian Navy carrier reckoned to be the centre of gravity of Indian Navy Fleet. The strategic soundness of the decision has never been questioned. GHAZI was the only submarine, which though of World War II vintage, had the reach and capability to undertake operations in distant waters. The deployment was an ambitious and a daring decision and was designed to challenge the Indian Navy supremacy in the Eastern Theatre. Certainly, sinking of Indian Naval Carrier or its damage could have upset Indian Navy plans. She could also wage commerce war. Both these possibilities afforded great potential for Pakistan

Navy, as it would have created significant effect and would have forced IN to devote more resources for defence. The submarine was sadly lost in the inherently risky mining operation against port of Vishakapatnum probably on 3/4 December 1971. After GHAZI's absence from the matrix, Indian Navy was virtually without any resistance to impose blockade in Bay of Bengal. During the ensuing operations, Indian Navy had damaged and sunk a number of merchant vessels at the port anchorages of Chittagong and Chalna.

- d. **Mining Operation.** The approaches to Chittagong were also mined by Pakistan Navy on 7 December and subsequently reinforced on 9 and 12 December to check the Indian advances. This denied direct access to Indian forces into Chittagong Port for a long time even after the surrender.
- e. **Indian Carrier Operations.** Indian Navy's concept of operations was to deploy this element for power projection and to effectively blockade the Eastern Pakistani ports. The carrier not only augmented the IAF offensive efforts, it also created a sense of complete encirclement, which had far reaching psychological impact on the morale of Pakistani forces in the Eastern theatre. From 4 December, a series of air strikes on a variety of targets along East Pakistan's Coast were launched by the carrier. Sea Hawks from the carrier were extensively deployed to keep the pressure throughout the war. Considerable damage was caused to ships and shore installations. Gunboat, COMILLA was sunk and RAJSHAHI was severely damaged during such an air raid at the outer anchorage. In the absence of PAF and the news of GHAZI's demise, the Indian Navy Carrier Group carried out attacks on airfields of Chittagong and Cox Bazar with impunity.
- f. **Indian Navy Amphibious Operations.** The Indian Navy carried out amphibious landing south of Cox's Bazar, on the night of 15/16 December with the aim of cutting off the line of retreat of Pakistani ground forces from this direction. In the process two Indian soldiers were reported to have lost their lives. Since there was no opposition from Pakistan forces, as the

events were close to the instrument of surrender, the Indian Navy's amphibious operation appeared to have served no purpose except to demonstrate their capability.

- g. **Escape of Rajshahi.** After the surrender, PNS RAJSHAHI which was damaged during the aerial attack slipped out of the Chittagong Port with seven naval officers, two air force officers and thirty six sailors. The boat after navigating through the precarious minefields broke the Indian blockade and managed to reach Penang, Malaysia.

26. **Western Theatre**

- a. The war on the Western front started mid day on 3 December 1971 when the PAF carried out pre-emptive strikes on a number of Indian airfields. The deployment of PN in this theatre, at least by numbers was comparable to Indian Navy, however, the capabilities of the two navies point out that Indian Navy was in an advantageous position as far as combat power and maritime air capability is concerned. PN was deployed in this theatre to augment seaward defence, but it was to prove otherwise in the subsequent course of events. The news of outbreak of hostilities did not reach PN until 1700 hours on 3 December. Therefore, when hostilities broke out, the Pakistan Naval ships were either at Karachi or Gadani anchorage, although the submarines were deployed well in advance and were in their patrol areas. Three major operations took place in this theatre and included two missile attacks by IN and the sinking of an IN ship by PN submarine.
- b. **Indian Navy Missile Attacks.** Two missile attacks by IN were carried out on 4 and 8 December and became the most significant aspect of the war on two accounts; first, that these were planned by units which did not have long range and were primarily meant for coastal defence, and the second, that this attack shaped the subsequent operations during the rest of the war. The attacks, code named Trident and Python resulted in sinking/ damage of 5 ships including two combatants of PN, PNS KHAIBAR and MUHAFIZ. Missile attack also hit the Oil Terminal

at Kemari, resulting in heavy fires which continued for several days. PN actually had no defences against anti ship missile and no wherewithal to shoot down the missile boats. The rudimentary air reconnaissance through PIA aircraft or by private aeroplanes flown by civilian pilots detected the second impending attack, but no effort was made available to counter it. PN ships were subsequently recalled within harbour in the absence of air cover and means to fight missiles. The missile attacks however, paralysed the PN Fleet and did achieve the desired IN objective of blockading Pakistani ports.

- c. **Submarine Operations.** On 9 December PNS/M HANGOR while operating on the Kathiawar coast 40 miles south west of Diu, detected two enemy ships. These were deployed on a hunter killer mission and providing ASW protection to the force returning after second missile attack on Karachi. The operation resulted in sinking of IN Ship KHUKRI and serious damage to the other KIRPAN, thus, manifesting the correct offensive deployment and promising potentials of sub-surface platforms. The sinking forced Indian Navy to devote resources for ASW defence and thwarted any further offensive plans.

Trade Warfare

27. Commerce warfare is an important aspect of maritime warfare and the most suitable platform for the purpose is submarine, however, no such operation could take place during the entire war of 1971. Though PN submarines were ideally placed to conduct unrestricted commerce warfare, the permission to do so was denied by the Pakistani government, for reasons not known. However, disruption of Pakistani SLOCs was carried out by IN missile boats in the west and carrier in the east, resulting in 16 merchant vessels (Pakistani and neutrals) getting sunk, imposing an effective blockade in both the theatres. Stopping of trade had little impact on the overall national war fighting stamina due to short duration of the war. The blazing of oil reserves at Karachi were of course cause of concern.

Inter-Services Cooperation

28. This aspect was missing altogether. PN was unaware of the timings of land operations and PAF effort needed by the Navy was not always forthcoming, thus, greatly affecting the operations and

directly contributing towards the outcome of war. It actually on one hand resulted in letting the forces involved in missile attacks escape unscathed and on the other, created a Blue on Blue situation i.e. PAF aircraft attacking PN ship at anchor, considering it to be Indian Navy Missile boat. On the other hand, IAF and Indian Navy operated in tandem with each other and operated in support of each other.

Analysis

29. Now coming over to analysis and first trade warfare:-
 - a. No operations were authorised against merchant ships, whereas, PN submarines were ideal platforms for conduct of commerce warfare.
 - b. Indian navy missile boats disrupted PN SLOCs from the west.
 - c. The Indian aircraft carrier and ships after sinking of Ghazi in the east exercised sea control.
 - d. Due to the short duration of war there was little impact due to disruption of SLOCs.
30. **Inter-Services Cooperation**
 - a. There was minimal cooperation between PN and other services and aspect of inter-services cooperation was missing altogether in some cases.
 - b. On the outbreak of hostilities, PN Submarine lost opportunity to pursue Indian Navy's fleet on 3 December as PN was not informed of commencement of war.
 - c. Strike against retreating Indian ships and missile boats was not carried out despite PN's request to PAF after the first attack on Karachi.
 - d. Later, PAF aircraft attacked PNS Zulfiqar, considering it as enemy ship due to mis-reporting by PN observer.
 - e. The Indian Air Force and Indian Navy interaction in some cases was also less than perfect.
 - f. Indian Naval aircraft carrier and ships supported land campaign in the eastern theatre.

31. **General Analysis**
 - a. **Geographical Situation.** Pakistan was at a disadvantage due to severance of flights and long vulnerable SLOCs.
 - b. **Opposing Strategies.** The Indian Navy adopted an offensive-defensive strategy. On the other hand, PN adopted a 'Fleet-in-Being' strategy.
 - c. **Surveillance and Air Cover.** Ship and airborne radar systems were not available to PN.
 - d. **Blockade by Indian Navy.** Indian Navy was successful in blockading Pakistani ports.
 - e. **Technology.** Technological disparity between the two forces was evident from the superior missile technology and carrier operations from Indian Navy.
 - f. **Training.** PN training effort was not up to the mark to go into the war.
 - g. **Intelligence.** Intelligence played a vital part in the war. But this aspect also found wanting.
32. **Analysis of Indian Navy**
 - a. The achievement of war justified the expansion of Indian fleet and creation of indigenous tactics and procedures.
 - b. The IN Carrier incursion emphasized the credible sea control capability.
 - c. The possession of relatively sophisticated surface to surface missile had given the Indian navy an absolute tactical advantage.
 - d. The interaction with Indian Air Force was less than perfect.
33. **Analysis of Pakistan Navy**
 - a. PN despite losses had reasonable performance in the face of overwhelming strategic difficulties.
 - b. PN was technologically inferior in relative surface platforms.
 - c. Despite the loss of GHAZI the submarines had proved their worth. The deployment of GHAZI put a caution into the enemy mind and they did not deploy their aircraft carrier initially in the East Pakistan Theatre. Rather they placed it at Nicobar Island.
 - d. Mining is a specialized operation and Ghazi had not carried out a single mining operation at sea prior to deployment.

- e. Seaward defence of Chittagong and Khulna ports with only four gunboats was an unrealistic aim which PN failed to maintain due to limited resources.
- f. Absence of clear directive to attack enemy shipping.
- g. No defensive measures against the Indian missile capability as PN was unable to provide seaward defence. Resultantly, the Indian missile attacks were reported as air raids.
- h. Midget failed to launch torpedoes. But lost 38% personnel, due to Bengali origin which resulted in critical shortages in key branches and security breaches were experienced.

34. **Lessons Learnt**

- a. Well equipped, trained and operational platforms are essential for successful employment in war.
- b. Inter-services coordination at strategic and operational levels is the key to achieve national strategic objectives.
- c. Conceptual and task oriented peacetime training can be decisive in war.
- d. Up-to-date intelligence gathering is key to its utilisation for conducting operations.
- e. Improved maritime air platforms, especially for surveillance is need of the hour.
- f. The expansion of merchant fleet is essential for justifying assured sea trade.

PART-IV

AIR OPERATIONS

General

1. After having discussed detailed accounts of Land and Naval operations during 1971 War, it is pertinent to analyse the conduct of air operations in 1971 War. Learning lessons from 1965 War, when IAF had qualitative disadvantage in some aspects, it diligently made remarkable improvements in her air assets. Undoubtedly, PAF while keeping up with its glorious history of participation in 1965 Indo-Pak War and Arab Israel War of 1967, performed well and within its constraints in 1971. The events which unfolded during the course of the war and limitations that PAF faced in both Western and Eastern sectors would be discussed in the course of this research.
2. The research would comprise an insight into PAF's mission and strategy while critically looking at composition of two opposing forces. The concept of operations of both sides will be discussed, which would lead to conduct of air operations in Western and Eastern theatres. After analysing the air operations, pertinent lessons would be drawn to address the shortcomings and avoid mistakes in future.

Mission of PAF

3. PAF, being a tactical air force, did not have any independent strategic objective. The aim of the PAF was always to support Land and Naval operations to achieve the joint military objective. The irony of the fact is that documentary evidence of presence of a joint military objective, at least with the PAF, was not available at that time. The mission of Pakistan Air Force as laid down by the Supreme Commander's Directive of 1967 was:
 - a. To fight the air battle offensively and create a situation which will make it possible for the army to operate without serious interference from the enemy air force, while providing limited close and reconnaissance support to Army and Navy.
 - b. To be prepared to give maximum air support for any crucial battle, when so directed by the supreme commander.

PAF Air Strategy

4. Keeping in view the political aim and military objective of India in mind, PAF adopted its air strategy accordingly. PAF's main objectives in addition to air defence of its main bases were:

- a. To gain and retain a favourable air situation for employment of strategic reserves in hours of day light at a short notice, from the areas of their deployment to the threatened sectors or zone of the decisive land battle.
- b. To provide an all out close support concentrated in time and space, should the enemy succeed in breaking through our defenses.
- c. To gain a favourable air situation in the sector of intended offensive by our Army.

PAF's Concept of Operations

5. Now let us view the PAF's concept of operation. According to the Concept, PAF had to:

- a. Give overriding priority in its support to the proposed offensive of 2 Corps.
- b. Carry out offensive counter air operations against forward IAF airfields to impede operations against own Army.
- c. Provide Close Support and interdict enemy supply lines to bolster own land offensive.

6. The analysis of air strategy proves that:

- a. The war directive was broad in nature without specifying where, when and how.
- b. The joint planning did not specify effects desired rather only sortie calculation was done.
- c. The envisaged enemy hypothesis was the possibilities of conduct and not the hypothesis of concept.
- d. The threat assessment did not highlight enemy's strengths and weaknesses, which would have formed basis of our CONOPS.
- e. CONOPS was primarily designed for Northern sector.
- f. Concept of AD operations and manner of their conduct was not included in CONOPS.
- g. CONOPS was based on an initiative with IAF. A contingency plan for initiative with PAF was not evolved.

IAF's Air Strategy

7. The air strategy pursued by the IAF was:

- a. To launch large-scale air field strikes to attain complete air superiority in the theatre of operation.
- b. To lay heavy emphasis on interdiction missions against enemy's important high value targets.

- c. To provide as much close support as the Army desires, especially when the offensive is launched.

IAF's Concept of Operations

8. The IAF, being the fifth largest air force of the world, had broad based plans in the view of her lessons from the failures in 1965. IAF's priorities enlisted by the then CAS IAF, Air Chief Marshal PC Lal were as follows:-

- a. Air Defence of homeland and the bases was the first priority.
- b. The next most important job was support of Army and Navy where Army took precedence over Navy.
- c. Counter Air Operation to neutralize PAF was the third priority.
- d. Attacks on energy sources including POL and Power Stations was the fourth priority.

Command Set-up

9. Although a Joint Operations Centre was set up in Pakistan but no traces of joint operational endeavours could be found. The officers posted to JOC had no concept or previous training on Joint Military Operations. The three services were working in isolation, and plans neither being shared nor jointly chalked out. On the direction of President General Yahya Khan, the Commander-in-Chief of PAF took initiative on 3 December at 0900 hours at Headquarters COC for Dusk strikes. On the other side, IAF had established two independent western and eastern air commands, linked with corps headquarters, thus, IAF could muster better command and control set-up to respond effectively to the ground situation.

Composition of Forces

10. To execute respective operations, assets of both airforces were markedly different. Contrary to embargo from Pakistan's major arms supplier US, IAF had USSR available and it invested heavily on the lessons it had learnt after 1965.

11. The PAF's combat assets comprised assortments of B-57s, Mirages, F-104s, F-86s and F-6 aircrafts. 10 Royal Jordanian Air Force F-104s joined PAF. The IAF combat aircrafts included Mystere, Canberra, Hunters, Gnats, SU-7s, and HF-24, totalling about 924 aircrafts distributed in 33 squadrons, the disposition is as given below. This gave the IAF an advantageous ratio of 1: 3.2.

AIR ASSETS 1971 WAR

PAF		IAF	
F-6	90	MIG 21	232
F-86E	74	SU 7	128
F-86F	65	GNAT	165
F-104A	18	HUNTER	200
MIRAGE-III	23	MYSTERE	60
B-57	16	HF 24	59
RB-57	2	CANBERRA	80
Total	288	Total	924

12. In the Eastern theatre, PAF had only one F-86 squadron against 10 squadrons of IAF. Jet capable base was Tezgaon, and Kurmitola near Dacca being under construction was kept only for emergency recoveries. In the combat support category, the IAF had over 192 transport aircrafts and 210 helicopters. The Indian naval aviation had 45 aircrafts, including Seahawks and Alizes. This gave IAF an edge of 10:1.

13. Regarding Western Force structure, IAF's 15 plus airfields were arranged in varied depths under low and high level GCI coverage with technical advantages like height finding, IFF, radar controlled guns, SAMs, modern ELINT and an upgraded infrastructure. PAF in West had 8 MOBs and 4 FOBs, limited high and low level radars with 25 and 7 percent coverage respectively, lack of seaward radar coverage, limited manual AAA but no SAMs, some pens, MOUs at essential locations and faced 1:3 IAF aircrafts.

Air Defence Assets

14. PAF had two high level radars and three medium level and five medium/low level radars. The US embargo degraded the maintenance support, hence, it was difficult to maintain high readiness states of these radars. These radars, however, remained available throughout the conflict but major watch was carried out by three medium level radars. The major limitation of our air defence system was inadequate high altitude coverage and gaps in low level coverage. Despite hundreds of reports, Mobile Observer Units were of less help due to bad communication systems at hand and last but not the least Pakistan lacked seaward air defence.

15. In the Eastern Sector, PAF had only one radar at Dacca to cover total sector, which remained non-operational for most of the time. The MOUs were also removed due to threat of sabotage from Mukti Bahni. On the other hand our adversary had invested wisely in air defence system, mainly augmented by Soviet help. The area of interest had been well lit up with high and low level radars, whereas, the terminal defences at VPs, specially the airfields were guarded with radar guided guns and surface to air missiles. Most of IAF combat aircrafts were dispersed over a number of airfields and housed in hardened aircraft shelters.

Operational Capabilities

16. The assets shown clearly signify the fact that IAF had clear cut edge in quantity and could concentrate air power wherever she desired. It could attack 800 miles in Pakistan, using its potent offensive element with impunity. PAF on the other hand greatly suffered due to very less percentage of offensive elements. It had only one radar, one fighter squadron and a few anti aircraft guns to take on formidable Indian Air Force in the Eastern theatre and wide disparity in the West. Additionally PAF did not have sufficient numbers of critical items like specialist bomb pylons, launchers gun packs and hardly any drop tanks for its strike aircrafts like mirages. Thus, PAF strike capability had serious flaws both due to numbers and essential items. Due to inadequate ADGE, the air defence system necessitated CAPs to protect air bases, resultantly, many important VPs like rail and road network were practically remained unprotected.

17. The close analysis of the ORBAT highlights that:
- a. IAF had huge numerical superiority.
 - b. In Eastern sector PAF's presence was negligible.
 - c. To cater for IAF's mass raids, assets were widely dispersed creating more VPs to be defended with already thin resources.
 - d. Effective ADGE was not available to PAF, which necessitated reliance on standing CAPs, consequently less effort for other operations.
 - e. Jacobabad Forward Optional Base was not activated.
 - f. Joint operations were a least priority.

Air Operations in the East

18. Although the hostilities formally began on 3 December 1971, the air operations in the East had started from March-April. PAF's only squadron of F-86s had been busy in operations against Mukti Bahini and Indian incursions, as it was employed to knock out

guerrilla camps and was heavily committed in air defence as well. Thus, strikes against enemy airfields did not figure in its operations. As regards anti surface force operations in Eastern theatre, IAF having no opposition from air, concentrated to army support missions flying 1178 sorties i.e. 80 per day till 15 December. The IAF's primary role in East Pakistan was to reduce the military and natural obstacles to help accelerate the pace of land force's drive towards Dacca. It played a decisive role by flying interdiction missions against river ferries and railway junctions to impede the supplies and troops movement of Pakistan Army. It interdicted Pakistan Army's supplies and troops, thus, contributing in speedy land advance towards Dacca. IAF also flew combat support missions by helicopters and airlifted army troops across river obstacles. Carrier based Sea-Hawks flew support missions in Southern Bengal without any interference. With formal declaration of war, IAF concentrated on neutralizing the operational CG of Tezgaon and Kurmitola near Dacca and conducted continuous day and night airfield attacks. Due to continuous bombing and subversive activities, PAF repaired the last 5000 feet strip that too got subsequently bombed, effectively halting operations on 7 December despite availability of serviceable aircrafts. Thereafter, IAF transferred its AD fighters to West. Operating out of seven airfields all around East Pakistan, ten IAF squadrons had complete air supremacy for the remainder of the war and, thus, gave all out support to Indian 4 Corps. It was only because of Air Supremacy that India could bring a quick end to war in the East.

19. **Analysis.** Purely defensive operations by an unsupported air group beyond the age old accepted force ratio of 1:3 in defensive operations are against the nature of air power. Moreover, when pitched against such odds, there can barely be any offensive afforded. Consequently, it was not the men or machines but their support infrastructure and environment that failed. The Analysis of Air Operations in the East reveals that :

- a. The airmen of lone 14 Squadron operated with determination and courage against IAF OCA and in support of land forces.
- b. PAF lost 5 F-86 in air to air combat and 11 were self-destroyed, before airfield was taken over by Indian Army.
- c. IAF wisely used its air power first for air superiority and then all out support to Army

- d. IAF lost around 15 aircrafts in air engagements and to ground fire.
- e. Though IAF attrition was more, however, it achieved its overall objective. At the end of war, IAF was upset on these losses as it felt that army had excessively relied on air support causing unnecessary casualties to costly aircrafts and pilots.
- f. The performance of a single PAF squadron against 10 marks the saga of courage and determination and is a golden chapter in the history of PAF. Despite being heavily outnumbered, number 14 Squadron inflicted significant damage on the enemy, in total they shot down 4 Indian aircrafts in aerial combat.

Air Operation in the West

20. **Offensive Counter Air Operations- PAF.** After delaying for ten vital days, the Pakistani leadership decided on 30 November to formally declare war on India. The actual operations by the PAF started on 3 December 1971. PAF's OCA strikes at sunset of 3 December targeted the forward Indian belt, which included Srinagar, Awantipur, Pathankot and Amritsar airfields, along with radars at Faridkot and Amritsar.

21. These strikes did not achieve any significant success. The offensive counter air campaign against enemy airfields and radars continued on 4 and 5 December as well but did not achieve any significant success except the famous gun attack by F-104s on Uttarlai, which destroyed number of Indian aircrafts on ground. On the same night following the OCA strikes, PAF's night-bombing campaign was launched against 13 airfields in the intermediate belt and deeper. It involved 15 B-57s, 4 T-33s and a C-130 against eleven IAF airfields. Eight of these strikes could not reach their targets. The effects created as acknowledged by the then Indian CAS Air Chief Marshal P C Lal in his book '**My Years with the IAF**' were:

Airfield	Effects
Halwara	Two major craters on runway
Amritsar	4-5 craters on runway
Pathankot	Runway damaged
Sirsa	Runway unusable for 12 hours
Jaisalmer	Electric power facilities hit
Uttarlai	Runway unusable for six days
Bhuj	Fairly accurate attacks made runway unusable for over 12 hours

22. **Offensive Counter Air Operations- IAF.** IAF responded to PAF's OCA strikes by launching night bombing campaign close to midnight. 15 Canberras struck Sargodha, Mianwali, Risalewala, Murid, Chander and Masroor airfields. However, minor damage was reported at some of the airfields. The next day, IAF launched attacks against twelve airfields and two radars of the PAF. The IAF continued with the offensive air campaign against the PAF's airfields for the next three days, without inflicting substantial damage to the PAF. Due to heavy attrition on IAF aircraft, the IAF was quick to change its strategy and, instead, diverted its air effort towards interdiction of railways, roads and communication network at FEBA. However, occasional attacks against PAF airfields were undertaken throughout the war.

23. **Analysis OCA.** If we analyze the offensive counter air operations, it can be said that our strikes against enemy airfields were largely ineffective barring a few initial successes. The causes of failure of offensive counter air campaign can be attributed towards:

- a. Engaging a large number of airfields with limited force.
- b. Gun and rocket attacks against airfields were not profitable due to availability of hardened shelters on IAF bases. General purpose bombs at low angles against runways did not cause required damage.
- c. Selection of appropriate time for the raids could have yielded better results but many missions were wasted because of darkness or poor visibility.
- d. Attacks on Indian radars remained unsuccessful mostly due to acquisition problems.

24. The pattern of our night raids was similar to our dusk strikes. Far too many targets were attacked to be effective. PAF pilots lacked training for carrying out effective night strikes.

25. During the offensive counter air campaign on the western front, PAF flew 255 sorties, which is 8.42% of total war sorties and PAF lost 5 aircrafts in air combat i.e. an attrition rate of 2%. On the other hand Indians flew 262 sorties, which is 3.56% of their total war sorties, whereas, India lost 54 aircrafts. Although both the sides flew almost the same amount of sorties, the percentage for Pakistan was almost 9% of total sorties flown against 4% of Indian effort.

26. **Defensive Counter Air Operations- PAF.** The PAF ADGE was known to IAF due to the disclosure of information by defecting East Pakistani officers and men. IAF could, therefore, avoid the radar cover and operate with freedom. In the East, PAF

with 14 pilots and the remaining 14 aircrafts of number 14 Squadron valiantly fought the enemy, ten times of its size. However, within three days, Tezgaon airfield was cratered, which could not be repaired due to the non-existence of RRR facility. The IAF lost a total of 11 aircraft, out of which 4 were shot down by number 14 Squadron and 7 by ground defences. The PAF lost only 3 aircrafts during these 3 days. In the West, the shortfall in ADGE was compensated by employing CAPs and forward VAs/VPs were left undefended. A total of 1557 sorties were flown by PAF during DCA operations.

27. **Defensive Counter Air Operations - IAF.** IAF had a reasonably good radar cover, comprising Russian radars and radar controlled terminal defences, although the low-level coverage left areas that could be exploited. Services of the Soviet airborne early warning aircraft Moss was also reportedly available. Despite that IAF in its air defence was unable to inflict any serious losses on Pakistan Air Force.

28. **Analysis DCA.** Statistics reveal that both Air Forces vigorously pursued DCA with PAF dedicating 58% (1748 sorties) of its total effort while IAF dedicated 46% (2460 sorties) in the West. Regarding effects, approximately 50% of IAFs total attrition was due to DCA while 35% of PAFs total attrition was due to IAF DCA. However, it can be said that our air defence system was organized to provide a measure of protection to PAF installations only. Lack of radars and poor communications with MOU entailed more number of CAPs, inspite of which the interception ratio remained very poor. On the other hand, IAF, in spite of being the fifth largest air force of the world, was no better. Although they had acquired number of radars from Soviet Union, yet due to lack of integrated low-level coverage, their air space could be violated at will by PAF, without any serious threat.

29. Despite deficiencies in the overall ADGE, the PAF pilots and the AAA operators were able to inflict significant attrition on the enemy strike aircrafts. However, effective air protection could not be provided to own surface forces due to inadequate ADGE. The joint IAF and IN strikes were greatly successful in Karachi due to very limited early warning and reaction time available to PAF.

Counter Land Operations

30. **Western Theatre.** The Indian strategy in the west was aimed at fighting a holding war. Four land battles on the western front are described below, where the Air Forces played a pivotal role.

- a. In the Poonch Sector, a Pakistani brigade was supposed to be launched from the north, while para-dropped commandos were to infiltrate from the south. However, the IAF's counter attack prevented a juncture between these forces and the Pakistani assault on Poonch ceased to exist on 5 December.
 - b. The Pakistan Army launched the ground offensive in Chamb Sector on the night of 3 and 4 December. Initially, the PAF Sabres from Peshawar and later on from Sargodha and Murid joined the operations. In order to soften the Indian defences, they destroyed 18 enemy medium guns and an ammunition depot at Akhnur and the operations were carried out on both sides of River Tawi. The PAF flew a total of 117 sorties in this sector, out of these 32 sorties were in direct close support sorties against 302 sorties by IAF, out of which 200 were for close support. As the Indians were operating from dug in positions, thus, the missions were not as effective as desired. As our troops were on the move, thus, they were exposed and vulnerable to enemy air attack due to which IAF achieved better results and helped reverse Pakistan's offensive west of river, thus, saving the vital road to Jammu.
 - c. In Rajhistan, 18 Division Offensive was a total surprise for PAF. No aircraft were based within 250 kilometers to provide air support, as Jacoabad was not activated due to absence of prior notification. The offensive started at 2300 hours on the night of 4 and 5 December, next day it took just 4 of the 6 Hunters based at Jaisalmer to destroy or disable 27 Pakistani tanks of 18 Division.
31. On the other hand, PAF also played a significant role in preventing major disasters in two sectors:
- a. In Shakergarh, where a three-pronged offensive by Indian forces was succeeding rapidly, The PAF from Sargodha, Murid, Peshawar and Riselawala provided extensive support and flew 206 air support sorties, disrupting three bridging attempts, claiming 56 tanks, 114 vehicles and helped check the Indian advance towards Sialkot.
 - b. In the south, the Sind-Kutch area was virtually

defenceless against the massive Indian southern command onslaught. Nagar Parker, Chachro, and Naya Chor had fallen. PAF's timely intervention in the form of some 150 sorties (from PAF Base Masroor) made a significant contribution to arrest the Indians advance towards Hyderabad. By the cease fire, PAF had claimed 20 Indian tanks, 5 trains, 63 vehicles, 3 bulk fuel storages and an ammunition depot. On the other hand, IAF did fly fighter and bomber sorties, but PAF maintained a continuous thrust and shot down three enemy aircrafts. Thus, Pakistan Army was able to re-occupy the lost territory.

32. **Interdiction.** In addition to above, PAF also carried out some interdiction missions at its own initiative. The IAF carried out well-planned attacks on Pakistan's POL facilities at Karachi harbour, Rawalpindi and near Multan, additionally, it also attacked Sui Gas fields. The attacks on Karachi had set a large fire, which caused significant concerns in the public. IAF also attacked railways but with no serious effects.

33. **Analysis of Counter Land Operations.** While analyzing result of anti-surface force campaign in the western theatre, it can be said that where Pakistan's advances in Poonch, Chhamb and Rahimyarkhan-Ramgarh sector were reversed by IAF, PAF can be credited for blunting enemy offensive in Shakargarh and Chhor-Nagarparker sectors.

34. A total of 913 sorties, 31% of total air effort were flown in support of land forces. As the PAF was to whole-heartedly support the 2 Corps offensive, it had the obligation of self-preservation. Thus, it could undertake only 139 missions against 329 i.e 42.2% close support missions requested by Pakistan Army. Thus on the whole PAF could fly much more than what it did due to four squadrons kept for decisive offensive, which was never launched. On the other hand IAF flew 51% of total air effort on anti surface operations.

35. **Counter Sea Operations.** In maritime role, the air forces on both sides figured only marginally: -

- a. PAF had very limited maritime support capability and, thus, only daytime attacks could be launched against the enemy's surface force through GP munitions, if the Indian Naval ships were within the radius of action of Masroor based aircrafts. A B-57 attacked Okha harbour and inflicted severe damage

to its fuel and ammunition dumps, an F-104 managed to shoot down an Indian naval Alize aircraft. PAF also flew 35 sorties in Naval support and in one of these by miscalculation of Naval controller fired on own ship. 127 sorties of PIA Fokker and C-130 aircraft for visual recce were also provided. Mostly hunting OSA missile boats, which were never found due to wrong reporting thrice, it ended up attacking the friendly vessels. The first request by the MHQ was a night strike against enemy ships 270 nms in the sea, nothing significant was achieved.

- b. IAF on the other hand, had created special maritime operation centers for support to the Navy. The number 1 Maritime Air Centre at Bombay for supporting Western Naval Command and number 3 Maritime Air centre at Cochin for supporting Southern Naval areas. IAF was well equipped to undertake the role that it was assigned. IAF carried out strikes by Canberra and Hunters and set the Karachi oil storage facility on fire. This destruction has also been claimed by Indian OSA boat.

36. **Summary of Air Operations.** PAF generated 3027 sorties as compared to 7346 by IAF. That was a remarkable achievement keeping in view the 1:3.2 inferiority in numbers. Throughout the conflict, PAF lost 38 aircrafts (1.25%) that included 11 self destroyed aircrafts in Eastern wing, whereas, India lost 107 aircrafts in total (1.45%). Therefore, despite large disparity in numbers, PAF still maintained its perseverance and viability to check IAF onslaught in the western sector.

37. As compared to 290 sorties of PAF, the IAF flew a total of 261 sorties for offensive counter air operations. It comprised only 3.9% of total effort, compared to 8% of PAF. The lack of offensive effort by IAF can be attributed towards the shift in their policy towards OAS after initial days.

Overall Analysis of Air Operations

38. As covered earlier PAF flew more sorties as compared to 1965 war. As far as assets are concerned, PAF flew 1.7 times more than IAF and 1965 War but could not bring the same effect, as was shown in the previous presentation. Due to safety mind set, four squadrons were not utilized for air operations. However, the PAF while maintaining its viability remained up to the task for the main

offensive to be launched by the Army.

39. Thus, PAF lacked balance between offence and defence and remained reactionary despite remaining viable force. On the contrary, IAF resorted to balanced employment of all facets of air operations, hence, focused and flexible: IAF achieved its war time objectives. To sum up the analysis, it may be concluded that PAF's concept of operations rightly identified assigned tasks. Although, apparently PAF couldn't achieve the desired results, it gave requisite support to the sister services despite heavy DCA operations.

PAF Performance Comparison with 1965 Air War

40. PAF in the Western Theatre fought with 2 more squadrons i.e. 11 as compared to 9 in 1965 War. Despite a shorter conflict, shorter by one third, the air operations in the two theatres were twice as intensive even without the major 2 Corps offensive, which never materialized. The average rate of sorties per day was 216 in 1971 as compared to 107 in 1965. The PAF flew 46% more air support for the Army and Navy, and launched 34% more air defence stories than in 1965. Its day strikes against enemy airfields were two and a half times of those in earlier war. An overall comparison of different types of missions flown during the two wars is shown in the table below:

Type of Mission	(1965 War 22 days) Sorties Flown	(1971 War 14 days) Sorties Flown
Air Defence	1,304	1,748
Air Support to Army & Navy	647	951
Day Strikes Against Enemy Airfields, Radars, etc.	100	160
Night Strikes Against Enemy Airfields, Radars etc.	165	130
Other Missions (photo recce, helicopters, etc)	148	38
Total Effort	2,364	3,027
Flying Intensity (Sorties per Day)	107	216

41. **Lessons**

- a. During peacetime, developmental strategy should be executed after realistic assessment of existing resources and wartime requirement.
- b. The importance of an effective Joint Services mechanism can never be over-emphasized. Such a body will not only be able to function centrally in wartime but help in the selection and maintenance of aim.
- c. Vulnerability of surface forces in absence of air cover cannot be over-emphasized. Land offensives and Maritime Support Operations must, therefore, be jointly planned with air force to ensure success.
- d. OAS in a theatre is required to be jointly planned in close coordination with surface forces to achieve desired effects.
- e. Adequate air defence ground environment is necessary for force protection and to provide favourable air situation over battle area.
- f. OCA operations being demanding with high attrition rates need to be meticulously planned and carefully executed. They should also be appropriately timed and composed. Flexibility is an important characteristic of air power, which must be exercised.

Conclusion

42. The war reached its culmination, however, the PAF in overall perspective remained under-utilized, as it was yet to employ the combat power it had held reserve for the major land offensive by 2 Corps. The PAF had most of its original combat force battle-worthy for a longer conflict. The viability of the PAF at the end of hostilities was of great importance at that juncture, given India's ominous euphoria in the aftermath of the surrender in East Pakistan.

43. While the Pakistan Army was chaffing on the battlefield, and the PAF poised at its bases, both were denied their most powerful act of reprisal for want of a timely decision. In the atmosphere of national rage and humiliation that prevailed after the defeat and surrender in East Pakistan, it was difficult for the PAF to derive any real comfort from an acknowledgement that it had acquitted itself honourably during those last fateful days. This recognition came, fittingly enough from the Army C-in-C, in a letter to the Air Chief

dated 1 January 1972:

“ . . . I wish the Army was in a position to exploit the excellent favourable air situation that was made possible by your small, yet hard hitting Air Force. . . ”

PART-V

ANALYSIS AND LESSONS

General

1. The analysis in this part will encompass national strategy, military strategy and operation strategy. An attempt will be made to relate it to our existing security environment where applicable.

Scope is as under:-

- a. Environment.
- b. National strategies of India and Pakistan.
- c. Military strategies of India and Pakistan.
- d. Operational strategies of India and Pakistan.
- e. Other aspects.
- f. Lessons.

Environment

2. International Environment

a. USA

(1) The Pak-US relations were not fully understood by both parties, especially by the former. Pakistan's desire of a US security guarantee against Indian designs was indeed a fallacy as the US aimed at merely furthering her own national interests. In fact, US viewed India as a strategic partner in the region. Thus, for the US to have sided with Pakistan during the war was only a distant dream. Preservation of East Pakistan was not a vital / strategic national interest of the US, as against her long term relations with India and/or a confrontation with USSR. Despite this, Pakistan linked its security to US. This asymmetrical relationship served to bring India and Soviet Union even closer.

(2) US guarantees in the form of 'The Instrument of Security' signed at Karachi in 1959 and another signed at Ankara in March 1959 stating that, "government of US will take such appropriate measures including the use of armed force in order to assist the government of Pakistan" when it was called upon, proved to be worthless.

b. USSR

(1) Right from the independence, Pakistan alienated USSR by joining the pacts of

SEATO and CENTO with the US. Another nail in the coffin was the Badaber incident.

- (2) Pakistan's role in establishment of Sino-US relations acted as a catalyst towards Indo-Soviet treaty of friendship. The Soviets supported the Indians openly, whereas, Pakistan kept on waiting for the 7 Fleet even after the termination of the war.

c. **China**

- (1) Chinese were faced with grave issues domestically and, therefore, did not desire to get mired into the Indo-Pak conflict. However, their military support to Pakistan was valuable and they came to be known as true friends of Pakistan.
- (2) Chinese political leadership made efforts to advise Pakistani leadership not to escalate the issue and resolve it through political means.

- d. **UNO.** Pakistan's dismemberment was in fact the first incident since the birth of UN, where a stronger member state invaded a weaker one. The impotency of UN Security Council and the General Assembly to solve an international issue was stark. This set a new precedence in the international system, wherein, the stronger nations started to impose themselves on the weaker ones, while the UN just sat by watching as a lame duck.

3. **Domestic Environment**

- a. **The Geographic Abnormality.** There is no country in the world which is split up in two wings, with a strong enemy in between and totally surrounding one. Military implications of the geographic abnormality notwithstanding it manifested into:

- (1) Excessive delays in the routine state functioning and other administrative difficulties.
- (2) Decision-making was clouded due to the vast distances.

- b. **Political Situation.** East Pakistani political leaders in 1970 and 1971 firmly believed that powerful interests in West Pakistan, whether through connivance or force, had been blocking the efforts of

East Pakistanis to fully participate in political and economic life of Pakistan. Conversely, politically influential groups in the West perceived the Bengalis as latter-day Muslim converts still corrupted by Hindu practices, unlike descendants of founders of Islam or conquerors like themselves. What were perceived as fundamental and rightful claims by one side were seen as threats to core values and rights by the other. Salient points of political situation are as follows:-

- (1) One Unit system polarized the nation between East and West and, therefore, on the eve of 1971, Pakistan on the political front stood totally divided.
- (2) General Yahya government's first political failure was its incorrect reading of the prevailing political situation in East Pakistan. A correct reading of the whole picture could have resulted in a number of acceptable political options.
- (3) The East and West political divide was evident from the election results. Awami League (AL) contested the election purely on the slogan of sub-nationalist agenda.
- (4) Prolonged military rule resulted in erosion of civilian institutions and authority.
- (5) General Yahya's lack of political sagacity and suspicion of Sheikh Mujeeb and Bhutto's lust for power and Mujeeb's indomitable stance led to the political deadlock. Postponement of the 1 March inaugural session of National Assembly *sine die* initiated the political war between the President and the Awami League.
- (6) Political urgency by the central government to address the issue in a sagacious manner could have saved the day even after the carnage that followed the martial law, as the Army was still in control by mid May 1971. A political recourse at this stage could have reversed the situation.

- c. **The Economic Scene**
 - (1) Whereas, US stopped all aid to Pakistan as early as April 1971, aid to India continued. Nixon's threats to cut off aid to India in the wake of an aggression did not materialise, when hostilities broke out on 20 November. The sanctions applied on 30 November were limited to refusal to grant new licenses which amounted to a small amount of US \$17 million only.
 - (2) The worsening security situation led to stagnation in the economy.
- d. **The Socio-Cultural Setting**
 - (1) Bengalis were looked down upon by the West Pakistanis who thought of themselves as a superior breed. This cultivated deep animosity and hostility by the former that came to consider the West Pakistanis as colonizers of the East.
 - (2) Bengali sentiment was miscalculated. West Pakistan had no clue of their expected reaction of mass defection and migration to India in case of a military crackdown.
- e. **Erroneous Assessment of Indian Intentions and Designs.** Though East Pakistan situation was an internal issue of Pakistan, but was blown out of proportion by overt and covert Indian support. Subramanyan's statement of 31 March 1971 is a testimony to this fact, in which, he stated that, "what India must realize is the fact, that break up of Pakistan is in our interest, an opportunity the like of which will never come again". The Indian intentions translated into action but we failed to comprehend the real danger. While describing the causes of military debacle in his book '**Tragedy of Errors**' Lieutenant General Kamal Matin Ud Din (Retd) writes, "Unfortunately neither GHQ nor Eastern Command assessed the Indian intentions correctly. They continued to live under the false impression that New Delhi would give maximum support to Mukti Bahini from their own side of the border or at the worst occupy a chunk of East Pakistan territory to enable the Awami League leadership to establish a

provincial Bangla Desh Government on East Pakistan's soil. No deep thrust towards any major town and certainly not towards Dacca was visualized at that stage." It is therefore, evident that Pakistani leadership failed to assess the threat and Indian design correctly.

f. **National Morale**

- (1) One of the most important battle winning factors is the conviction of the nation in the cause and the will of its leaders to fight.
- (2) Pakistani troops had fought the insurgency for nearly eight months. With the severance of air and sea routes, they had to fight their so called countrymen with no end in sight. In these trying times, if their conviction was found wanting in any way is no surprise. Despite all the odds they fought resolutely with courage and won acclaim from friends and foes.
- (3) The war serves as a good example of the term, 'dialectic of opposing wills'. The President was on a visit to Sialkot the day Indians launched their offensive in Eastern Theatre. Commander Eastern Command lost the will to fight as early as 6 December. By as early as 7 December he was more concerned on how to secure a ceasefire than how to fight the enemy. The will to fight was absent in the Western Theatre too. From November 21 to December 3, the leadership was only wishing the war away. The Indians on the other hand made every attempt to achieve their political aim.

g. **Strategic Space**

(1) **India**

- (a) Sino-Indian conflict had won India favours of the East and the West. She also enjoyed a favourable position in some Muslim countries, especially with Iraq, Qatar and Kuwait etc.
- (b) Indian strategic freedom was greatly enhanced by the mass migration of

the East Pakistanis in the wake of the military action.

- (c) Indo-Soviet Treaty of Friendship also gave a significant fillip to her strategic freedom of action.
- (2) **Pakistan**
 - (a) Pakistan's strategic space was severely constricted when the government decided to declare martial law in East Pakistan on 25 March 1971. Even the Muslim countries were split up on the issue due to virile and effective Indian propaganda.
 - (b) Another opportunity was lost on 20-21 November, when Indians launched their attack in East Pakistan. We decided not to take the matter to UN Security Council, hence, failing once again.

National Strategies

4. **India.** Indian national strategy was comprehensive, cohesive, and well-coordinated at both domestic and international levels. Indians correctly set out their political aim and accordingly created suitable political and operational environment for application of her elements of national power, including the armed forces as follows:

- a. **Political Aim.** Indians had an unambiguous political aim i.e. dismemberment of Pakistan and creation of an independent country from East Pakistan.
- b. **Higher Direction of War**
 - (1) Indians apparently had a functioning national strategy in 1971. There existed a synergy amongst all elements of national power, which were geared towards the aim of dismembering Pakistan. They were working on the break-up of Pakistan as early as Agrtala Conspiracy.
 - (2) There was a good degree of harmony in their joint operations as a Joint Command Headquarters was established at Calcutta, with the Headquarters Eastern Command. General Sam Maneckshaw acted as Chairman

Chiefs of Staff Committee, who acted as a link between the political and military leadership. He also controlled and coordinated plans of the three services. Concerned civilian agencies were also fully integrated in mobilization of resources and building up of communication infrastructure for the operations.

- c. **Elements of National Power.** As stated earlier, to achieve the political aim, Indians effectively exploited all elements of national power including political, economic and military:

(1) **Political Prong**

- (a) Mrs Gandhi's elected government was able to muster full support from politicians as well as the masses as the Indian political system and politicians were far more mature than ours.
- (b) The Indo–Soviet Treaty of Friendship was a result of a well coordinated diplomatic offensive.
- (c) **Intelligence.** Indian RAW was at the heart of the separatist drive by Bengalis. RAW provided intelligence to the leadership, training to Bengalis in covert training camps, networking with Bengalis posted in West Pakistan and diplomatic missions abroad and organized psychological warfare campaign against Pakistani rulers. Pakistani intelligence agencies failed to counter this.

- (2) **Economic Prong.** India is successful foreign policy ensured that it received military and economic aid from both the eastern and western blocks. Moreover, she had also developed her indigenous defence industry at a faster rate since 1962.

(3) **Military Prong**

- (a) Indians employed the military instrument only when conditions for its application were ideal and assured attainment of the objective.

- (b) The ends sought by the political aim were within the capability of military element.
5. **Pakistan**
- a. **Political Aim.** Pakistan's senior political and military leadership misread the Indian political aim till as late as 3 December, and thought that it was limited to, 'capture a chunk of land to establish Bangladesh'. Hence, our political aim was to retain the integrity of a united Pakistan and not to allow establishment of Bangladesh. The war, therefore, was fought without a clear political aim. If the intention was to keep Pakistan together it was not possible by use of military force.
 - b. **Higher Direction of War**
 - (1) During the 1971 crisis, there was a dearth of competent leadership in Pakistan both in political and military domains. At the highest level, there was an overall inertia and a feeling of despair, confusion and despondency. Due to their ineptness, the country was pushed to a War when it was not prepared at all politically, diplomatically and militarily. Though General Niazi fought under unfavourable conditions, yet he cannot be absolved of the blunders he committed. Major General Sukhwant Singh, Deputy Director of Military Operations at Indian Army Headquarters at that time, later writes in Chapter 11 of his book '**The Liberation of Bangladesh**' (Vol-I) 'The Eastern Theatre, far removed from the Pakistani General Headquarters in Rawalpindi, needed a man of crisis who could face up to the sensitive and ticklish problems confronting him both in short and long terms and conduct operations with the minimum supervision and guidance. On the other hand, Niazi liked worldly pleasures and the pomp and show of the status he enjoyed. He was certainly not the man for the job in hand. He lost the battle before it started'.

- (2) The authority being concentrated in one man, the decision-making was seriously handicapped. Being the President, CMLA and the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, Yahya was unapproachable to his Principal Staff Officers even at critical junctures. Defence Committee of the Cabinet and Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee remained inactive throughout the conduct of war. Failure of coordination and integration of the war effort became one of the major causes of defeat.
- (3) At tri-service level, due to absence of any form of higher organization, the three services operated independently without any coherence or coordination.
- c. **Elements of National Power.** As opposed to Indians, elements of national power in case of Pakistan were not exploited in unison:-
 - (1) **Political Prong**
 - (a) Incorrect assessment of East Pakistan crisis led to a cursory treatment of the problems without addressing the root causes that lay in political sphere.
 - (b) Owing to political divisions, once the crisis got bigger, paralysis set in our political system and it could not chalk out a policy to keep the country united.
 - (c) **Intelligence.** Intelligence failure both in strategic and operational plans was comprehensive. The intelligence estimates suggested 46 to 70 seats for the Awami League and 20 to 30 for the Pakistan Peoples Party. Before the imposition of the Martial Law in East Pakistan, intelligence picture forecasted a quick and easy victory and before the war they prophesied that India would seek to seize only a chunk of territory to declare Bangladesh on East Pakistan territory.

- (2) **Diplomatic Prong.** Relying heavily on super power assurances and failing to realistically evaluate the nature and extent of support that could be extended by China, USA or the Muslim World, Pakistan remained on the diplomatic defensive throughout the conflict:-
- (a) Pakistan failed to invoke UN, when Indians kept on organizing, training equipping and launching Mukti Bahini.
 - (b) When Indians launched the attack on East Pakistan on 20/21 November, Pakistan failed to refer the matter to UN Security Council. We, hence, lost another opportunity to exert diplomatic pressure on India to cease armed intrusion.
 - (c) It was indeed strange that though being the aggressor, it was India which on December 3 launched a formal complaint with the UN Security Council stating that Pakistan had attacked India.
 - (d) Pakistan's diplomatic corps failed to exploit two distinct opportunities; one, on 5 December, when Soviets prepared a draft resolution seeking a political solution and an end to violence by Pakistani forces; two, when on 14 December, Poland prepared a resolution suggesting immediate transfer of power to elected East Pakistanis, ceasefire and withdrawal of Pakistani troops from East Pakistan.
- (3) **Military Prong.** When the gravity of the situation dawned on the Pakistani leadership, they employed the military instrument but by then it was too late. The Operation SEARCH LIGHT was poorly conceived, inappropriately coordinated and executed in haste without clear aims. It did not contribute to the overall

success of our political aim of keeping the two halves together. In fact it led to:

- (a) Internationalization of the issue.
- (b) Mass movement of refugees to India and, hence, opening the door to her for direct involvement.
- (c) Mass defection by EBR and EPR, alienating the population and, hence, compromising our liberty of action.
- (d) With unfolding of the events, it became increasingly evident that the military was neither physically nor psychologically ready to go to war.
- (4) **Media.** Expelling of foreign media from East Pakistan was not the right decision. It severely curtailed our freedom of action to influence anyone but ourselves. In fact, we were duped by our own media's propaganda as it grew and expanded.
- d. **Centre of Gravity.** Imposition of Martial Law and disarming of EBR and EPR politicized the army. Indians launched a venomous propaganda against Army, painting it as an army of occupation. Thus at the national level centre of gravity of Pakistan, which lay in her Armed Forces, was compromised.
- e. **Threat Assessment**
 - (1) There was a fundamental flaw in the threat assessment, wherein it was based on enemy intentions rather than capability.
 - (2) Clear threat scenarios, incorporating exterior threat to an interior one, were not evolved. The perception that India will not go for all out offensive and will limit her involvement to establishment of Bangladesh on a captured chunk of territory in East Pakistan continued till early December. This perception seen in the backdrop of Military Intelligence Directorate's claim that they had managed to get the plan of Indian Offensive in Eastern Theatre in August 1971 is perplexing.

Military Strategies

6. **India.** Indians launched the main offensive in East Pakistan, after having correctly read the political environment. This

was in total concord with their political aims. Indian grand design was to blunt the Pakistani offensive in the West through an offensive defensive strategy till operations in the East were successfully completed. After the Sino-Indian conflict in 1962, Indian military grew rapidly and by 1971 the conventional differential was apparent. Through successful diplomatic manoeuvres, Indians managed to relieve major forces tied down on the Chinese border:

a. **Military Aims and Objectives**

- (1) **Realistic.** In the Eastern Theatre, Indian, military initially aimed to capture a chunk of East Pakistan territory which was within its capability at that time. However, with availability of additional forces, this aim was expanded to the capture of entire East Pakistan with Dacca as the ultimate objective.
- (2) **Correct Strategic Posture in Western Theatre.** In the Western Theatre, Indians, while remaining on strategic defensive, planned to mount tactical offensives as part of protective manoeuvre, so as to deny us the liberty of action in this theatre. Selecting limited objectives was, therefore, justified because:
 - (a) Any sizable operation against West Pakistan would have contradicted the Indian policy and would have affected their ability to influence the conditions at the termination of war.
 - (b) It would have exceeded the political aim, while unnecessarily exposing India to vulnerability at both political and military level.
- (3) **Military Aim in Harmony with Political Aim.** Indians were sagacious enough to keep their military aims and objectives in complete harmony with the political aim and well within the military capability. The military objectives were suitably configured to adjust and expand with the availability of additional forces. It was a good example of adjusting the end to the limited means. This also shows how threat to Pakistan transitioned from the

lower to the higher end of spectrum but we remained fixed to only the lower level and were, therefore, unable to review and update the earlier threat assessment.

(4) **Analysis**

- (a) Indian military aim was compatible with their political aim.
- (b) Keeping a defensive posture in the West was, indeed, correct reading of the situation by the Indians.
- (c) A sizeable operation in the West would unnecessarily expose them without contributing to their political aim.

7. **Pakistan.** The basis of military strategy formulated in the late 1950s, i.e. '**Defence of East Pakistan lay in West Pakistan**' was deep rooted in the minds of our senior military leadership. This was further strengthened by the inaction on part of India in East Pakistan during 1965 War. A realistic evaluation of our capabilities and vulnerabilities would have shown us the peril of going to war in 1971. Clearly the exercise for evolving a well thought out military strategy was not resorted to:

- a. **Defence of the East Lies in the West.** The two main factors for this strategy were firstly, the political centre of gravity of Pakistan lay in the West and secondly, the main industrial and defence installations were located here. Based on these two factors, the perception that India will always attack West Pakistan first got firmly embedded in the minds of the political and military hierarchy, irrespective of the obtaining environment. For this strategy to succeed, the pre-conditions were:

(1) **Pre-conditions**

- (a) Full support of local population and total freedom of action of troops fighting in East Pakistan.
- (b) Allowing sufficient time for the offensive in the West to achieve meaningful gains for the Indians to recoil. This required superior resistance capacity of the troops in East Pakistan.

- (c) Before defences could be overcome by the enemy in East, the early offensive by superior forces on the Western front to ensure significant gains.
 - (d) Tying down of Indian Eastern Command troops due to the Chinese threat could work to our advantage.
- (2) **Analysis**
 - (a) The strategy surely did not take into account a main offensive in the East with dominant role of the fifth column.
 - (b) This strategy was rendered redundant in 1971, by the changed national security situation and geo-strategic environment.
 - (c) The conceptual linkage between the operational situation in the East and the West was broken, when there was a delay in launching the offensive in West.
- b. **Joint Planning Process**
 - (1) There existed a complete vacuum of joint planning, tasking and coordination. Though a Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee existed but it discussed only routine/ minor matters of service interest. While each service had its own plan for war there were no joint land- air or naval - air plans.
 - (2) Taking a look at the plans prepared and war-gamed by the Military Operations Directorate, it is evident that these were designed to meet the Indian offensive in the West only. It appears that the Eastern Command was left primarily on its own, with GHQ taking only nominal interest in planning and direction of operations.
- c. **Ends Incompatible with Means**
 - (1) Strategically, on the eve of 1971, Pakistan was in no state to take on India. Suffering from severe discord in domestic affairs, Pakistan's economy was in doldrums. On the diplomatic front she was under shadows because of

prolonged military rule. Pakistan had lost its edge of 1965 in military hardware and indigenous industrial capacity was insufficient. The strength available on the eve of SEARCH LIGHT was far less than the required for the operation. Thus, the prolonged application had serious ramifications.

- (2) Eastern Command was assigned a military aim which was incompatible to the means provided. Defence of every inch was not possible with the troops available. This caused dispersion, which ultimately led to defeat.

d. **Military Aim and Objectives.** In the absence of a clear political aim, a correct military aim could not be formulated for the following:-

- (1) Pakistan's military aim in the West was to defend the territorial integrity of Pakistan, destroy maximum invading enemy in the process and to capture as much territory as possible, through a timely counter offensive.

- (2) In the East, it was to defend the territorial integrity and disallow establishment of Bangladesh on East Pakistani soil. However, there exists a controversy between the CGS, Lt General Gul Hasan's and Commander Eastern Command, Lt General Niazi's view points on the mission assigned to the Eastern Command. It goes on to show the utter lack of coordination at higher level.

(3) **Analysis**

- (a) Despite the changed political and military realities, Pakistan's military planners continued to live in the syndrome of defence of East lies in West, thus, they took it as one theatre of war which was incorrect.

- (b) Pakistan Army was rendered incapable of making substantial gains in West on completion of assemblies, due to distribution of effort in the East and the West.

- (c) Upon realisation by the Commander Eastern Command that Indian ultimate objective was Dacca and not the perceived chunk of territory, he failed to rectify the situation.
- (d) The military aim of holding every inch of ground in East Pakistan led to wide dispersion of the Eastern Command forces, which got stretched out to 30 kilometers with no realistic chance to fall back to fortresses. Moreover, the defences were without depth and reserves.
- (e) The offensive manoeuvre in the West was plagued by the following :-
 - i. It was delayed for too long to have any impact on the situation in the East.
 - ii. The military strategy and aim led to a paradoxical situation. More troops were required to defend East Pakistan, which could be at the cost of the offensive in the West.
 - iii. The preparatory manoeuvre was designed to attract Indian strategic reserves, but it was neither configured for the same nor could it create effects to warrant the same.

Operational Strategies

8. Centre of Gravity

a. Eastern Theatre

- (1) Identification of Dacca as centre of gravity by both sides was correct. Being hub of communications, provincial capital and HQ of the military Command, its fall would lead to a general collapse of all resistance in that Wing.
- (2) Indians proceeded to expose it very deliberately and methodically through its preparatory manoeuvre, while choosing to

- bypass centres of any resistance for an early capture of Dacca in the subsequent stages.
- (3) Interestingly the Indian Centre of Gravity in the Eastern Theatre did not lie in its system of forces rather it was in the Militant Wing of the Mukti Bahini. However, Eastern Command could do little to unhinge this Centre of Gravity.
 - (4) On our part, the system of forces did not ensure adequate defence of Dacca. Though it was catered in the initial plan, the final plan left it exposed. Therefore, no resistance was put up even when a relatively weak enemy force ex-101 Communication Zone threatened it from the north.
- b. **Western Theatre**
- (1) At the strategic level the Centre of Gravity was in the freedom of action of launching the counter offensive with the twin objectives of supporting operations in East Pakistan and capturing sensitive territory in the West.
 - (2) At the operational level, the strategic reserves on both sides formed the operational centre of gravity. While we failed to dislocate the Indian reserves, they managed to neutralise our reserves by denying us the freedom of action of launching these reserves through a successful exterior manoeuvre and also through their offensive-defensive tactical actions.
9. **Strategic Imbalance**
- a. **Eastern Theatre.** Due to absence of reserves at the operational level, which were essentially required to protect the centre of gravity, an imbalance existed in our system of forces. To influence the battle, no reserves were maintained at tactical level. This imbalance was further accentuated by the Indians, by launching a multi-pronged offensive and through a well planned preparatory manoeuvre, which forced the Eastern Command to use its meagre reserves in the early stage of the battle to beef up the forward defences.

b. **Western Theatre**

(1) **Strategic Level.** From 12 to 25 October, with regards to Indian strategic centre of gravity, there existed an imbalance as the Indians had not yet completed their deployment in the Western Theatre, whereas, our deployment had been completed. Besides having a reasonable chance of success in achieving its primary purpose of capturing sensitive areas in the Western Theatre, it could have helped situation in East Pakistan as well. This was, however, a limited window of opportunity.

(2) **Operational Level**

(a) At operational level, Indian centre of gravity was in her strategic reserves located in general area of Muktsar. No significant imbalance existed in the assembly.

(b) An endeavour was made on our part to induce the imbalance by fixing Indian local reserves through successful local offensives and by trying to embroil her in the Shakargarh Salient. Besides committing local reserves in various zones of operation, Indians saturated Shakargarh bulge, but her strategic reserves could not be distracted as we did not employ strategic baited gambit for this purpose. The conditions, thus, created were not ideal launching for our counter offensive. Splitting of 33 Division to reinforce Shakargarh and 18 Division was also a mistake, which was a result of nervousness.

10. **Time, Space and Relative Strength (TSR Matrix).**

Indians were able to manipulate the time, space and relative strength to their full advantage as under:

a. **Time.** At the strategic level, the Indian choice of winter months for the war helped them to make additional forces available from the Chinese border, thus, enabling them to concentrate superior relative

strength. The winter months helped them at operational level too, enhancing the operational and tactical mobility. Their endeavour was to successfully complete their operations in Eastern Theatre in the shortest possible time through a multi-pronged offensive by way of avoiding pitched battles and manoeuvring around strong points, thereby, threatening rear areas and forcing battles on reverse front. At the same time Indians denied the defensive forces to trade space for time.

- b. **Space.** The available space was used by Indians to good effect for generating maximum combat power and directing all efforts towards the vital space i.e. Dacca Bowl. In order to achieve surprise, they placed their main effort in the East i.e. Tripura where communication infrastructure was initially inadequate. However, it was developed before launching of their offensive.
- c. **Relative Strength.** As has been brought out earlier, Indians were able to concentrate superior relative strength in the Eastern Theatre through a successful exterior manoeuvre, appropriate choice of time and by correctly adopting a defensive posture in the western theatre.
- d. Having analysed the TSR Matrix, it is evident that the Indians carefully synchronised the time, space and relative strength to gain maximum benefit during this conflict. On the other hand, Pakistan did not employ the strategy of trading space for time in a land, which was tailor-made for it. We also failed to employ superior relative strength at the appropriate time to capture sensitive territory in the western theatre.

11. **Strategic Approach.** In Eastern Theatre the weakness in the system of forces did not lay so much in numerical strength as it did in the concept of defending every inch with a forward defensive posture. The enemy identified this vulnerability and exploited it hence, adopting an indirect approach hitting at the weakest link in the system of forces:-

- a. **India**
 - (1) Indians successfully employed indirect approach in an overall indirect strategy mode. At the strategic level they employed

insurgents to disrupt the lines of communication and create an insurgency situation, justifying direct intervention.

- (2) Operationally through heli-borne and para-landings they managed to bypass, isolate and fix the defender forcing a battle on reversed front and uncovering the centre of gravity.

b. **Pakistan**

- (1) Pakistan applied direct approach in a direct strategy mode.
- (2) Strategically we tried to quell the political uprising through use of military instrument.
- (3) Operationally we tried in vain to draw Indian forces to battle which succeeded only in the initial phase. Once the breach was made, the defence were bypassed and cut off to fight isolated and uncoordinated battles.

12. **Liberty of Action**

a. For Pakistani forces in the Eastern theatre it was seriously curtailed by following:

- (1) Army's freedom was restricted to main routes and towns as Mukti Bhini ruled the hinterland. Due to guerrilla action there was poor security situation in the rear areas.
- (2) The Indian Air Force had complete command of the air.
- (3) Non-availability of appropriate transport and poor communication infrastructure were their severe handicaps.
- (4) The communication security had been compromised as the Indians were in full knowledge of whatever was being communicated through telephone and wireless.
- (5) Non-availability of tactical and operational reserves.
- (6) Poor C⁴I² arrangements available with Headquarters.
- (7) Strategic disadvantage of being isolated from the other wing by 1600 Kms and logistic problems arising out of naval and air blockade.

- b. Indian liberty of action was greatly enhanced due to following:-
 - (1) Being on the offensive, having the initiative to select the direction and time for application of forces.
 - (2) Fifth columnists provided valuable intelligence support and guidance in the country side.
 - (3) Complete control of the skies.
 - (4) Advantage of exterior manoeuvre and contiguity to the mainland.
- 13. **Balance.** By the time full fledged war started, system of forces was in a state of critical imbalance in the Eastern Theatre. In the West also we went in temporary imbalance, when 33 Division was split up to buttress the defensive effort in the north and the south. Other imbalances that existed on the eve of the war were:
 - a. An un-tenable military aim and faulty operational strategy.
 - b. The desertion of East Bengali troops.
 - c. The total lack of air support in the Eastern Theatre and its poor coordination and planning in the West.
 - d. The imposition of air and naval blockade of the Eastern Theatre.
 - e. Lack of armour, engineer and artillery components of the two infantry divisions inducted since imposition of martial law in the Eastern Theatre.
 - f. Release of 53 Brigade to bolster defences of Feni left Dacca totally defenceless.
 - g. Destruction of communication infrastructure by the insurgents.
- 14. **Strategic Effects.** The war provides a near classic example of how subsidiary effects contribute to produce main effects. It was through fixation, isolation and blockading of the eastern command that dislocation and paralysis was achieved:-
 - a. **Subsidiary Effects.** The Mukti Bhini actions along the border area forced an exaggerated forward defence. The preparatory manoeuvre launched by Indians to secure jump off points for the offensive fixed the defence. Subsequently, the enemy isolated the defence into penny pockets through bypassing.
 - b. **Dislocation**
 - (1) In the Eastern Theatre, dislocation was induced in the system of forces very early

through air blockade, followed by naval blockade on the initiation of hostilities. Mukti Bahini operations in the rear areas were subsequently supplemented and peaked with the enemy air campaign. Concurrently, dislocation was further accentuated by early employment of reserves in November for clearance operations and to plug the gaps in the defences.

- (2) The preparatory manoeuvre was not deep enough to trigger dislocation of enemy's centre of gravity.

c. **Paralysis**

- (1) The politico-military leadership failed to respond when Indians attacked East Pakistan on night 20/21 November. In a conference at Presidency on 22 November, the President is quoted to have said, "what can I do for East Pakistan? I can only pray". Reflecting clearly the state of his mind and the paralysis that had struck the top leadership that nothing could be done to retrieve the situation. The will to fight had been lost even before the battle was joined at least at the top level. Perhaps, this was the reason that neither there was any reference made to the UN nor any response mounted in the West.
- (2) Paralysis at the national level was reflected in the failure to timely launch the offensive in the west and the inability to move the UN Security Council.
- (3) At operational level, paralysis manifested in Commander Eastern Command's inability to respond to all out Indian attack, as his forces lay thin along the international border with no reaction capability. On the Western Front the counter offensive could not be launched despite the opportunity on 7 December. Commander Eastern Command, totally paralyzed, continued to look westward for some miracle to save his unfortunate command.

- d. **Operational Cycle**
 - (1) **India.** Indians successfully completed their offensive operational cycle in the East Pakistan. They initiated with the preparatory manoeuvre of 21 November and followed it up with the capture of Dacca and, thereby, the achievement of their final strategic objective.
 - (2) **Pakistan.** Our defensive - offensive cycle was left half way when the preparatory manoeuvre launched by holding formations was not followed up by the launching of 2 Corps.
- 15. **Culminating Point**
 - a. The culminating point of defence is the stage when it loses the capacity to react against enemy offensive. The culmination set into the system of forces in East Pakistan by 3 December and by 7 December the situation was beyond salvation.
 - b. The enemy managed to complete the operational cycle well before reaching her culmination point.
- 16. **Superior Strategic Orientation**
 - a. **India**
 - (1) Indians enjoyed superior orientation in East Pakistan due to contiguity of this sector to their mainland and the ability to completely isolate this theatre.
 - (2) The rise of anti-Pakistan sentiments also enhanced their superiority in this theatre.
 - b. **Pakistan.** The superiority of strategic orientation enjoyed by Pakistan in RCC was denied by the Indian protective manoeuvre. Pakistan also enjoyed superior strategic orientation around the Silliguri Corridor which had the only road link between West Bengal and Assam. Pakistan, however, could not exploit it.
- 17. **Distribution of Forces**
 - a. Distribution between the defensive manoeuvre in the East and the defensive offensive manoeuvre in the West required critical balancing. Defence of East lies in the West led to a paradoxical situation. Whereas, the insurgency situation in the East called for more troops to retain sufficient resistance capacity, the

- same would be at the cost of weakening the decisive battle in the West.
- b. Lack of resources in the East meant curtailing of the objectives, which unfortunately was not done.
 - c. East Pakistan element in the army amounted to a near 20%, its defection created significant problems in the system of forces, especially in the Eastern Wing.
 - d. Indians on the other hand succeeded to shift their Eastern Command from the Chinese's border by correct timing of their operation.
18. **Articulation of Command**
- a. The EBR battalions were not raised on mixed caste composition like the rest of the army.
 - b. The raising of two adhoc divisions did not in any way increase the fighting capability of Eastern Command. The divisions had neither the staff nor the equipment to function as proper HQs. Mixing of Civil Armed Forces with regular troops resulted in lowering the resistance capacity of formations.
 - c. Severe shortages in communication systems with headquarters aggravated the command articulation in already overstretched defensive system.
19. **Concept of Operation**
- a. **India**
 - (1) **Strategic Effects.** Indians sought and achieved physical dislocation of our forces by unhinging the strategic centre of gravity through a preparatory manoeuvre. They also attained psychological dislocation through a fine display of operational art. Resultantly, Pakistan's Eastern Command was paralysed.
 - (2) **Strategic Direction.** Indians correctly identified Dacca as the strategic centre of gravity. They, therefore, selected it as the strategic objective, and synergized their efforts to achieve desired effects.
 - (3) **Speed.** One of the major reasons for success was the speed of operations that accelerated the collapse. This was made possible through a successful preparatory manoeuvre, the indirect approach, air superiority, support of

the local population and proper use of the adequate bridging and aviation assets.

(4) **Design of Operation**

(a) Having successfully identified that their main objective lay in the Eastern Theatre, the Indians formulated a defensive design in the Western Theatre. They resorted to tactical offensives to address their vulnerabilities as well as tie down own forces till their operations achieved success in the east.

(b) In the Eastern Theatre the Indians allured the Pakistani forces outward, forcing them to fight piecemeal battle, thus, exacerbating the inferiority in numbers. This also prevented Pakistani forces from concentrating for the defence of Dacca. The three pronged pincer attack reinforced this design with the main coming from the east and diversionary from the north.

b. **Pakistan.** Till early December the Pakistani leadership naively believed that the Indian aim was to establish Bangladesh on a piece of captured East Pakistani territory. This was proof of leadership bankruptcy, which resulted in strategic immaturity and an inability to carry out accurate threat assessment. At the operational level the hypothesis evolved did not account for the shortest and most direct approach to Dacca from the north. The hypotheses of conduct were either not evolved or could not be applied during the conduct stage.

(1) **Design of Operations**

(a) In the Eastern Theatre a forward defensive posture was preferred based on BOPs, strong points and fortresses made logistically self sufficient to fight a prolonged battle. This design was negated by Commander Eastern Command's instruction that no withdrawal was to take place from BOPs until 75% casualties had

- occurred. This led to bypassing and isolation of troops in forward localities and the spirit of the plan to fall back to the fortresses was killed.
- (b) In the Western Theatre the design was based on limited preliminary operations to be carried out by holding formations keeping the objectives limited. This was aimed at early commitment of enemy strategic reserves, thereby, dislocating his operational centre of gravity followed by a counter offensive.
- (2) **Analysis - Eastern Theatre**
- (c) **Failure of Threat Assessment.** The forward defensive posture adopted was based on the presumption that Indians had limited objectives in the east, not realizing that the Indians had the capability of capturing entire territory of East Pakistan.
 - (d) **Applicability of Hypotheses vis a vis Operational Environment.** In case of the Indians going for capture of the complete East Pakistan and the main effort developing from the east, the plan was to transition to a rearward posture. However, when this hypothesis actually materialised neither was requisite planning in place nor was the operational environment conducive for such a transition, owing to the adverse situation in the rear areas as well as the air situation.
 - (e) **Concept of Strong Points.** Defence based on strong points was a flawed concept. These lacked mutual support and were, thus, either isolated or reduced in isolation and, thus, became redundant. Correct analysis of the situation would have made it evident that this posture was not viable owing

to the enemy strength as well as rear area security situation.

(3) **Analysis - Western Theatre**

(a) **Disregarded Strategic Reality.**

Given the military strategy of both sides as well as their strategic posture in the two theatres of war, Western Theatre was a secondary theatre for Indians. Realization of their political aim was dependent on their success in the Eastern Theatre. Therefore, launching an offensive in the Western Theatre was not their strategic compulsion. Our decision to wait for the Indians to show their cards before launching the counter offensive, therefore, neglected this strategic reality. Given the limited scale of our preparatory manoeuvre, Indians could not have been expected to react to cause any appreciable imbalance in their system of forces. Neither did we employ a stratagem-baited gambit, which could induce the imbalance of the required magnitude. Failure to recognize this relationship led us to a condition where employment of our strategic reserve was linked to a preparatory manoeuvre, which was not strong enough to produce the desired effects.

(b) **Preparatory Manoeuvre/Deception.**

The purpose of the preparatory manoeuvre was to induce an imbalance in the Indian system of forces. This could only have been achieved, if the armour component of the strategic reserve was displaced. However, the plan did not commensurate with the intended aim. The size and scope of the preparatory manoeuvre did not warrant such a response from the Indians. Local

attacks as well as the effects of the deception suggested a main effort in Kashmir Sector that reinforced the first four Indian hypotheses, which all related to IHK. This could only have attracted the infantry component of the reserve, whereas, displacement of the armour component was not a realistic expectation.

- (c) **Disregarded Strategic Environment.** Operational art is orchestrated to achieve strategic objectives but this is practised only in a given strategic environment. An operational strategy devised for a particular strategic environment may not be applicable if the environment changes. Thus our concept of the counter offensive was a sound concept but probably not applicable to the strategic environments prevailing in December 1971.

Other Aspects

20. **Leadership.** The crisis of leadership has haunted Pakistan since the death of the Quaid. This became even more evident when the country faced its worst crisis in 1971. Our inept and selfish leaders blundered into a war for which the nation and the military were not prepared and which had been lost even before the first bullet was fired. General Sukhwant Singh declared Lieutenant General Niazi as “essentially a battalion commander in general’s uniform, who was not up to the delicate task which required a man capable of thinking for himself and taking momentous decisions and carrying them out with least supervision as he was too far removed physically from the hub of decision making.” General Maneckshaw says, “Poor Niazi did not have any battle plan at all, in fact he did not know what to do”. While it may not be fair to hold General Niazi responsible for all that went wrong, the fact, of the matter was that he was the embodiment of intellectually bankrupt leadership that was not restricted to the civilian masters. Our leadership in Islamabad and in the General Headquarters also displayed lack of a sense of responsibility and urgency to address the national and military issues at the desired and defining moments.

21. **Psychological Warfare**
- a. Clausewitz has termed war as a “*contest between two opposing wills*”. Undermining of the will of the adversary leads to intellectual paralyses, leading to physical dislocation that is the hallmark of the operational strategy.
 - b. Indians realized in 1965 that the strength of Pakistan lay in the will of its people to defend the motherland. They shrewdly undercut this and turn this very strength into our weakness by turning the popular will against the state.
 - c. Indians targeted the will at every level. At the national level, they focused on the two nation theory terming it as a fallacy. At the operational level, they sought psychological isolation of our forces. This was achieved through physical disconnection from the West, creation of a hostile environment in the East and isolation of the troops within the corridors formed by the mighty rivers. Once by-passed and isolated, the will to fight collapsed.
 - d. Another psychological dimension of the war was one of our own making. A belief had set in, both at the civilian and military level, that USA and China would come to our help in the hour of need. When this did not materialise, both the nation and the military suffered a severe psychological blow that severely undermined the will to fight.
22. **Logistics**
- a. The logistics was a major problem. Not only was the initial build-up inadequate but the situation was further accentuated due to the naval blockade, poor communication infrastructure and a hostile population.
 - b. On the western front multifarious problems were faced by the formations and units:-
 - (1) The Corps depended upon Logistics Areas which were under the QMG, thus creating over centralisation and inflexibility.
 - (2) The Logistics Areas were raised as last minute war raisings. This was an adhoc arrangement which was poorly planned and did not have sufficient time to settle down and perform their task in the desired manner.

- (3) Between Lahore and Karachi there were two Logistics areas functioning and when 2 Corps was to operate in that area a third logistic area from Peshawar was brought in the last minute, causing obvious coordination problems.

23. **Mind-sets / Perceptual Biases.** We have traditionally been guilty of developing certain biases about our enemy that tend to clog our thinking and adversely affect our ability to think rationally in an unbiased fashion. Some of these in 1971 were:-

- a. Bengalis and Hindus are non-martial races, incapable of fighting.
- b. Indian intention to capture only a part of East Pakistan, which disregarded indicators to the contrary.
- c. Both USA and China would physically intervene.
- d. Rear area situation was assumed to be favourable in case of an offensive.

24. **Battlefield Intelligence.** Indians enjoyed a distinct edge in this arena. In East Pakistan they were ably guided by Mukti Bhini, whereas, the defection of some senior staff officers in West Pakistan made Indians privy to our operational plans. Conversely, the Pakistani forces were short on intelligence, hampering operations in both theatres.

25. **Role of Air in a Modern Battlefield**

- a. Air not only serves to shape the battlefield but also provides essential security to a defensive/offensive manoeuvre against the enemy air attack. Without air support, freedom of action is drastically curtailed. Indian air played a dominant role in the East by snatching away the freedom of movement from Pakistani forces. In the Western theatre, the disaster that befell the manoeuvre in the south, again owes itself mostly to the enemy air action.
- b. Air will play a dominant role in supporting the war effort. Freedom of tactical and strategic movement will hinge on air support.

Lessons

26. National Level

- a. **Indian Mindset.** Nehru's statement, "Pakistan was a political expediency of the past to be undone in the future", reflects mainstream Indian thinking about Pakistan. Flowing from this mindset is their grand strategy of unravelling Pakistan through a continuous process of intrigue and deceit. India will never spare an opportunity to hurt Pakistan. While we must be open minded and make serious efforts for peace with our neighbours and in the region, we must remain cognizant of the obvious and continuous threat presented by our powerful neighbour to the east.
- b. **Foreign Policy**
 - (1) In international relations, there are no permanent friends or enemies just the permanent interests. We, as a nation have traditionally shown a naivety, while developing relationships with international players. A constant review of the geo-strategic environment is essential to establish a realistic perception of interests and commitments of our allies.
 - (2) Defence of the territorial integrity of the country is the sole responsibility of the armed forces of that country. Defence collaboration with various countries is the norm but one cannot depend on any other country, no matter how close the relationship, to defend the motherland when the need arises. There is a need to fashion a foreign policy that best serves our national interests. Emotions and personal feelings must take a back seat when devising the foreign policy, which must be prudent and broad based.
- c. **Democracy**
 - (1) Winston Churchill once said "Democracy is the worst form of government, but its better than all the rest." We as a nation have to decide, once and for all, what is our preferred form of government and then every institution should work to protect and help grow the system. If

the consensus is democracy, then we must endeavour to make it work. We must not only promote political but also social, economic and cultural democracy.

- (2) Once it is decided that democracy is the preferred form of government at national level, the same should be promoted within the political parties. Provinces must be given their due share in the major political decisions of the country and those subjects that can be devolved to the provinces must be done at priority.

- d. **National Purpose and Aim.** We must develop an institutionalized system of developing our national policy and strategy. This must be broad based, taking into account all stakeholders. A vision for the future must be developed that sets course for the country and all subordinate policies and strategies must flow out of this.
- e. **National Integration and Harmony.** There is a need to forge national integration through the political process. For achieving harmony among all the provinces of Pakistan, political leadership needs to remove the genuine grievances of the under developed provinces and learn to accommodate their opinions.
- f. **De-weaponisation of Society.** Weaponisation of society is a major cause for concern. The free display of weapons by various political, religious and sectarian leaders as well as landlords and big businessmen is a clear and open challenge to the writ of the government. Resultantly, any grievances, whether political, sectarian, separatist, ethnic or nationalistic tends to turn violent and militarized. A comprehensive de-weaponisation campaign is the need of the hour.
- g. **Institution Building.** Strengthening of institutions is the bedrock of any democratic dispensation. Military rule tends to retard this progress. While beneficial in the short term, this is not beneficial in the long term as it revolves around one man rule. There is also possibility of use of disproportionate force for resolution of political problems that may

actually exacerbate the issue for which force was used in the first place. To retain its professional distinction, the Army must support and help civil institutions to grow while staying apolitical.

- h. **Media.** Media have come to be known as the fourth pillar of state. A formal media policy should be formulated to harness the full potential of this powerful tool that is in harmony with our national security policy. It is a double edged weapon and we need to make sure, we use it to our advantage rather than suffer from the consequences of a hostile media. We need to harness and gainfully integrate it in safeguarding and furthering our vital interests.

- j. **Internal Security**

- (1) **Political Stability and National Integration.** National integration is considered a vital national interest in the contemporary world. Our National Security Policy should address this key issue as a top priority, as no war can be fought without national integration. No policy can be imposed on the people by military force alone, the participation of the people is a must.

- (2) **Student Unions.** Role of student unions needs to be defined and should be apolitical. Student unions should be kept under strict surveillance and weaponisation of hostels must not be allowed.

- (3) **Intelligence.** The intelligence differential played greatly in India's favour in the 1971 War. Intelligence capability is probably one aspect that has acquired phenomenal importance over the last a few decades. The concept of 'smart war' is predicated on this ability. It assumes even greater significance in the 'wars amongst the people.' We must attain and retain this ability at the strategic and operational level to thwart our enemies' designs.

- k. **Self-Reliance.** The tragedy of 1971 should have taught us the importance of self-reliance especially in the field of defence and economy. Absolute sovereignty can only be guaranteed through self-

reliance. This will give our nation, especially our armed forces, the confidence and self belief to thwart any aggressive and nefarious designs of the enemy.

27. **Military Strategic Level**

a. **Defence Policy and Military Strategy.** Defence policy and military strategy should be in unison with the Grand National Strategy. The military strategy should be compatible with the political aims and objectives. The famous quote of Clausewitz that “war is the continuation of politics by other means” must always be the guiding principle, while formulating military strategy. The notion of ‘conventional war under nuclear overhang’ is a new dimension that must be taken into account. Following need consideration:-

- (1) Retention and development of deterrent capabilities in a responsible manner, so as to avoid victimization. Superpower guarantees must be viewed pragmatically.
- (2) Formulation of balanced development and employment strategies.
- (3) Need for viable war initiation and termination strategies and escalation control mechanisms.

b. **Higher Direction of War**

(3) No formal NSP exists and there is no clear methodology to prepare and review this essential document. The NSC is mired in political controversy and exists only on papers, as part of the President’s secretariat. It, therefore, cannot perform the task of higher policy guidance.

(4) **National Security Strategy (NSS).** National Security Strategy is a vital national document that is the handrail which guides strategy formulation. Important national interests must be identified and accordingly converted into short and long term national aims/objectives. An exhaustive study of environment should be undertaken to assess internal and external threats to our national aims and objectives. NSS must serve as a guide to all elements of national power for the

- attainment of our national interests and aims. NSS should be written and presented to the chief executive of the country every year along with the national budget and may be reviewed under extraordinary circumstances.
- (5) **National Defence Strategy.** A similar mechanism should be worked out for drafting and reviewing National Defence Strategy by the Defence Committee of the Cabinet.
- c. **Use of Military Instrument for Political Ends** Military action is not an end in itself rather a means for the achievement of political aims. Domestic political issues should not be resolved by use of force. Military force must only be used as a last resort and when applied it should only be used to create conditions for the political prong to take over.
- d. **Tri-Service Planning - Role of JS HQ.** Over the years, two schools of thought have emerged; one, propagating the maintenance of status quo while the second, advocating a complete transformation to jointery. We need to comprehend our peculiar environment and then come up with home grown solutions. The participation of JS HQ in tri-service planning has improved a great deal since 1971 but needs to be tailored to meet our particular operational environment.
- e. **Conventional Force Differential.** The conventional force differential has been growing since 1965. Indian economic boom of the 1990s and the intermittent embargoes to which Pakistan has been subjected have further widened the gap. The wider this gap, the greater the chances of war. Though the nuclear factor has transformed the strategic environment, but still talk of 'conventional war under nuclear overhang' still persists. This calls for an exhaustive deliberation to come up with our national security strategy that should incorporate a revitalised economy and indigenous defence production.
- f. **Nuclear Deterrence.** Conventional force differential can only be mitigated through the introduction of an extraordinary factor which in our case is the nuclear deterrent. We must protect, preserve and ensure credibility of our nuclear deterrence. Our nuclear

doctrine needs to preclude the 'no first use' clause and our nuclear threshold should remain ambiguous to remain effective.

28. **Operational Level**

a. **Operational Strategy.** In the realm of operational strategy following lessons are drawn:

- (1) The **centres of gravity** in political / military fields needs to be clearly identified and protected by adopting suitable posture and retaining adequate balance. Likewise, while on the offensive, our main objective should be to recognise and target the centres of gravity of the enemy.
- (2) The desired effects to be caused on the enemy system of forces should be carefully visualised and executed with adequate flexibility and contingency planning in order to succeed in dislocating, dividing, isolating or paralysing the enemy, despite his efforts to the contrary. Alternate options be worked out for all possibilities.
- (3) International environment is not conducive for the use of military force for achievement of political aims. State on state wars have become the exception rather than the norm. Strategy of indirect approach is the name of the game which the Indians used to best effect during 1971 war. We may draw lessons from this for the resolution of Kashmir on favourable terms.
- (4) Time, Space and Relative strength should always be manipulated to create synergetic effects. Careful choice of timings of the operations can help in achieving relative strength superiority and to generate maximum combat power as displayed by the Indians, in deliberately delaying their invasion of East Pakistan till November 1971. Space should be judiciously utilised to mount military manoeuvres which should be acquired if not already held.
- (5) When placed on interior lines in a theatre or zone of operation, we must also develop

necessary infrastructure and retain desired freedom of action to fully benefit from it otherwise the advantage may only remain theoretical.

- b. **Threat Assessment.** Enemy must be evaluated in view of his capability and not his intention. All possible scenarios should be worked out. This has traditionally remained the weak link. We have repeated similar mistakes in 1948, 1965, 1971 and in Kargil. The Military Operations Directorate needs to continuously carry out threat assessment and re-visit it regularly to update the current threat.
- c. **The Concept of Operation.** The first casualty of war is the plan. Concept of operation gives only broad guidelines for phases other than the first. It is for the commander to assess the situation and direct the force once the war commences.
- d. **Role of Air.** Air will play a dominant role in shaping the battle before and during the conflict.
 - (1) Detailed coordination with air force for all OAS and OCA operation is of vital importance.
 - (2) ADGE must also be given due importance in our developmental strategy.
- e. **C4I2.** Operational strategy is stifled in the absence of fool proof CVSR arrangements. Future conflicts will place heavy demands on redundancy of our communication assets to allow commanders to apply themselves effectively.
- f. **Liberty of Action.** The soul of operational strategy rests in the liberty of action. Its denial by the enemy to our Eastern Command led to a paralysis. Our liberty of action in FATA and Balochistan is far from ideal. Every effort must be made to improve liberty of action failing which either the objectives should be curtailed or the concept should be modified to suit the situation.
- g. Other lessons that can be drawn are:
 - (1) Mental mobility and adaptability in higher command is essential.
 - (2) Protracted internal security role saps the conventional capabilities of a force.

- (3) Reserves are essential to retain balance in the system of forces.
- (4) Unrealized perceptions of foreign help can break the will to fight.
- (5) Correct evaluation of means is imperative to define the ends.
- (6) Indirect approach has better chances of success.
- (7) Future operations will be calibrated by logistic potential of a force.

Conclusion

29. It is, indeed, an irony of fate that the very people who were in the vanguard of the Pakistan Movement, whose area was the only Muslim majority province of undivided India which had a Muslim League ministry and whose one of the illustrious sons had moved the Lahore Resolution, would just twenty four years later resort to dividing the country, which they themselves had helped to build. Faulty strategic assumption of the defence of East lies in the West and an unfavourable local population in East Pakistan can be termed as the overriding factors which led to the military defeat. It is important to highlight that the men fought gallantly and acquitted themselves extremely well of the challenge. Most of our formations/positions stayed intact and undefeated till the end but alas! tactical brilliance cannot compensate for the operational and strategic blunders.

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