



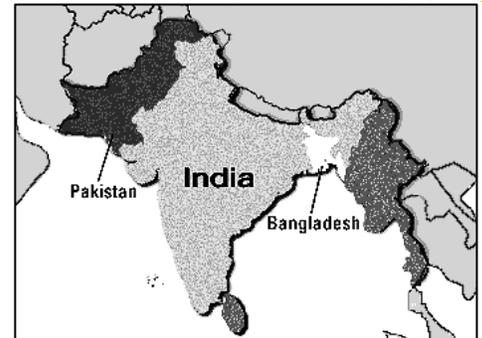
India and Pakistan – Nuclear States in Conflict

Background

When the British left the Indian subcontinent after years of controlling it, the old India was divided. The division was based mainly on religion.

The old India, ruled by the British for 89 years, had both Muslims and Hindus. But the majority of people were Hindu. After World War II ended, the British finally allowed India to become independent. Because most Indians were Hindu, the British were worried that the Indian government might treat Muslims unfairly. So the British decided to partition (divide) India between Muslims and Hindus. Pakistan was partitioned on the west for Muslims, and Bangladesh was partitioned on the east. Those two countries became – and still are – mainly Muslim.

The partitioning made a region called Kashmir partly in India and partly in Pakistan. But India and Pakistan have been arguing and sometimes fighting about Kashmir ever since, mainly because most people in Kashmir are Muslim.



In 1947, the United Nations passed a resolution stating that the people of Kashmir should get to vote and decide which country they wanted to be part of – India or Pakistan. But the vote was never allowed. It is generally believed that the Indian government will never allow the vote because they fear that the people of Kashmir would vote to join Pakistan. There are also many people in Kashmir who simply want independence. Neither India nor Pakistan will let that happen.

Since independence from Great Britain, India and Pakistan have disagreed about other things. But

Kashmir has been at the center of the continuing violence between India and Pakistan. Pakistan is open about supporting Kashmir’s “freedom fighters” and India calls those same fighters “terrorists.” Around 30,000 people have died in Kashmir over the last 11 years.

There have been three wars between India and Pakistan since independence from Great Britain – one in 1948 right after the partition, one in 1965, and one in 1971. There have been smaller battles in Kashmir. There have been several smaller battles since then, but no more full-blown wars. But if there ever is another war between these two countries, it would be even more dangerous than ever. This is because both countries now own nuclear weapons. Both

