INDIAN MILITARY THREAT AND PAKISTAN ARMY

From 1947 to 2017

Maj. Gen. S. Ithar Hussain Shah (R)

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DEDICATION

This book is dedicated to my late parents who taught me that life should have a purpose, to my wife and children who always supported me and to Pakistan Army which gave me an environment to actualize myself.

PREFACE

I was asked to write 'History of Pakistan Artillery' by Colonel Commandant Pakistan Artillery in 2013. I started the book in March 2013 and finished it in August 2015. While writing this book, I realised that since independence, India had constantly tried to impose its will on Pakistan by using or threatening to use the military instrument. India started military intervention in October 1947 in Kashmir, then in 1965 and in 1971 blatantly employed its armed forces to dismember Pakistan. It frequently concentrated its armed forces on Pakistani borders to coerce Pakistan. It was India which introduced nuclear weapons and missiles in the Subcontinent. Pakistan was left with a few choices. Either to succumb to Indian coercion or to guard its sovereignty by responding in kind to all kind of coercive escalation. In the last 72 years Pakistan has jealously guarded its sovereignty against all Indian threats irrespective of the cost or the sacrifices.

Therefore, I started researching on the lines that India has initiated escalatory militarisation of the Subcontinent starting in October 1947 and continued it with increasing vigour till now. After collecting sufficient material, I started this book in 2017 and finished it in mid-2018. Bulk of the information used was from my book 'History of Pakistan Artillery'.

Pakistani nation must understand the Indian strategic mindset against Pakistan. Indians insist on calling "independence" in 1947 as "partition" as if Pakistan separated from an independent India. Indian mindset has not accepted an independent and sovereign Pakistan. For the last 72 years they have constantly tried to coerce Pakistan into a client state. Despite failure at a huge cost of having the largest number of people living under poverty line in the world, Indians are bent upon perusing this failed policy.

I recommend this book for armed forces officers, policy makers and academia.

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CHAPTER 1
KASHMIR WAR 1947-48

Lahore resolution of 1940 later called as Pakistan resolution stated that, “No constitutional plan would be workable or acceptable to the Muslims unless geographical contiguous units are demarcated into regions which should be so constituted with such territorial readjustments as may be necessary. That the areas in which the Muslims are numerically in majority as in the North-Western and Eastern zones of India should be grouped to constitute independent states in which the constituent units shall be autonomous and sovereign”. It clearly meant that Kashmir being a Muslim majority state and contiguous to Punjab would form part of Pakistan.

The Muslims of Kashmir were also convinced that as per the "Plan of 3rd June, 1947”, being a Muslim majority area, J&K would form part of Pakistan. When the Maharaja failed to decide in August 1947 whether to join India or Pakistan, he was merely postponing the day of reckoning. He wanted to remain independent but was not sure if the people of Kashmir would allow him to continue as the ruler.[1] Maharaja's standstill agreement with Pakistan, anti-Muslim riots in Jammu District and construction of Jammu Pathankot road at utmost speed convinced the Muslims of Kashmir that all was not right.[2] Anti-Muslim riots in Jammu region had resulted in ethnic cleansing of Muslims and changed the demography of the region. Muslims of rest of Kashmir were worried that Maharaja may try his ethnic cleansing methods against them also. A public meeting on 24 August 1947, near Bagh, was fired upon by the state police. It resulted in a revolt on 27 August 1947 in Bagh. The Maharaja sent his army to crush the revolt.[3] The atrocities committed by the Dogra Army were widely reported in Pakistani Press. It was feared that unless some help was immediately provided the Muslims of Kashmir would

meet the same fate like that of Muslims of Jammu. Pashtun tribes from Pakistan's erstwhile Frontier Province, from Afghanistan and some volunteers from Punjab crossed over into Kashmir on 20 October 1947 to help save their Kashmiri brothers from Dogra atrocities. By 24 October, the freedom fighters had reached Baramula, only 35 miles short of Srinagar. In the evening of 26 October, Maharaja of Kashmir under duress signed the instrument of accession with India; against the spirit of 3 June 1947 plan thus violating the basic pillar of partition plan without thinking of the long-term consequences. In less than twenty-four hours, Indian army moved into Kashmir on 27 October. "On the evening of the same day i.e., 27 October, Quaid-e-Azam Mohammed Ali Jinnah, the Governor General of Pakistan, ordered Lt Gen Gracey, the acting Chief of Pakistan Army to move the army into Kashmir and secure it. Instead of obeying the lawful order of the Governor General of Pakistan, Lt Gen Gracey informed Field Marshal Auchinleck who immediately rushed to Lahore on 28 October and met Quaid-e-Azam. He told Quaid-e-Azam to take his orders back otherwise 500 British officers of Pakistan army would be withdrawn and transfer of military stores and equipment from India would be stopped. The threat was discussed in an emergency cabinet meeting and the orders to Lt Gen Gracey were withdrawn.[4] Pakistan therefore entered the war at a serious disadvantage by the refusal of Lt Gen Gracey, as it meant that henceforth Indian Army supported by Indian Air Force would be facing the irregular Pathan tribes and ‘Azad’ troops who lacked fire support, logistics and the senior command structure. The die was cast against Pakistan from the very beginning. However, it was also the beginning of misfortune for the millions of people of the Subcontinent for the next century. Indian short-sighted decision to intervene in Kashmir sowed the seeds of discord between the two newly independent states.

For ease of comprehension, Kashmir war would be covered sector wise. There were three main sectors i.e., sector one was South of Pirpanjal Range, sector two was River Jhelum and

Neelum Valleys and sector three comprised whole of erstwhile Northern Areas (now Gilgit - Baltistan).

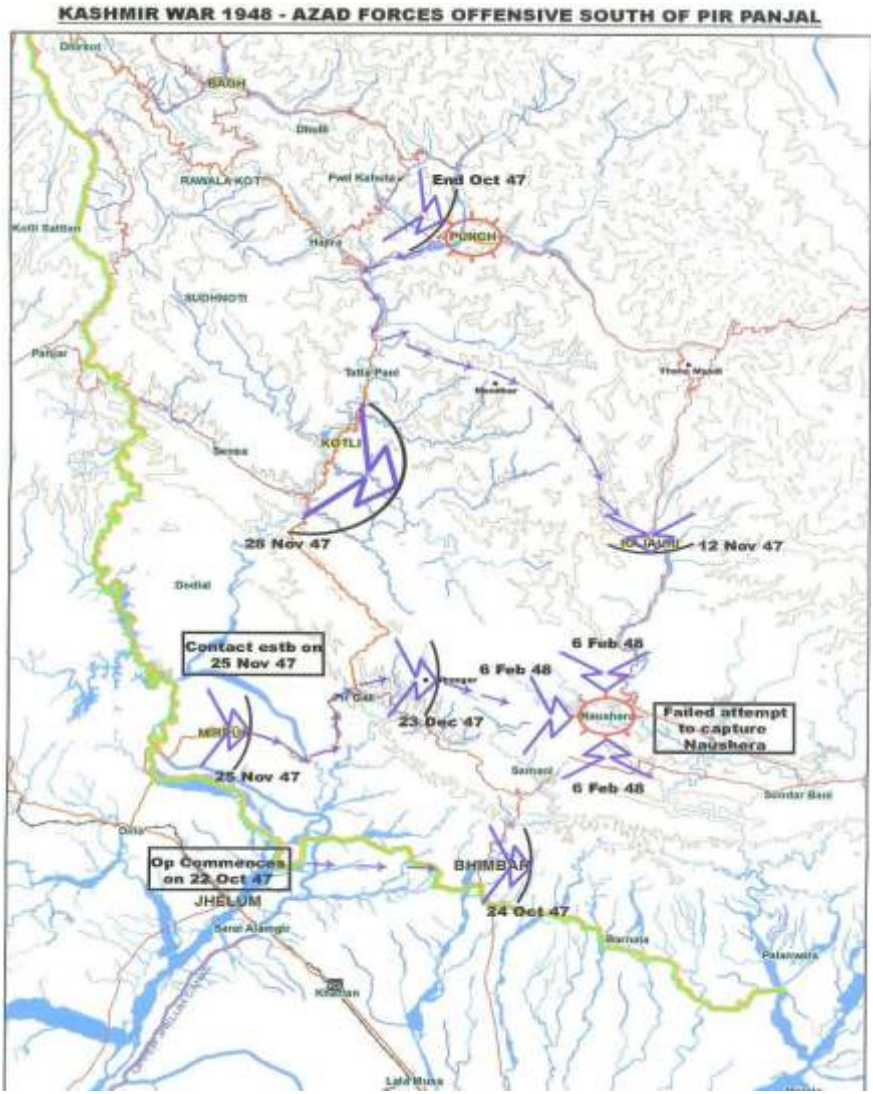
OPERATIONS SOUTH OF PIRPANJAL RANGE

The Kashmiris who started the revolt in Bagh on 27 August 1947, after being reinforced by Pathan volunteers on 20 October 1947 managed to liberate the area up to Poonch by end October. The Dogra army after retreating from this area got entrenched at Poonch. 'Azad troops' surrounded Poonch by end October. Azad troops comprised Kashmiri Muslims who were ex-soldiers of the British Army and had fought in the World War 2, Muslim troops and officers of Kashmir State forces, volunteers who acted as porters or were given some training to operate small arms and a large number of Pathan volunteers. While Pathans were commanded by their tribal elders, the Azad troops were organized into infantry battalions and commanded by the ex-officers of the state forces. Many ex non-commissioned officers were given commission by the newly formed Azad government (formed on 24 October 1947). While tactical level leadership was excellent, operational level leadership was very weak due to lack of experience at this level.

In the South, starting on 22 October 1947, the Azad troops captured Bhimbar by 24 October 1947. From Poonch some Azad troops moved south and captured Rajauri on 12 November, 1947. Mirpur was cleared by 25 November and Jhanghar was contacted on the same day.[5] On 28 November, Kotli fell and Jhanghar was cleared by 23 December 1947. Indian reinforcements started reaching Naushera by this time and it was fortified. The last offensive in this area by the Azad troops was launched on 6 February 1948 to capture Naushera. While Naushera was being defended by the regular Indian Army, supported by artillery and Air Force, the Azad troops lacked fire support. What to talk of air support, they had no artillery with them. The fire support was being provided by about 20 mortars captured from the enemy.[6] Despite superior numbers and better motivation, the attack on

Naushera failed due to monopoly of artillery and air by the enemy. Thereafter, till the ceasefire on 1 January 1949, the initiative in South of Pirpanjal Range passed to the Indian Army. By 18 March 1948, the Indians captured Jhanghar with the help of one infantry brigade supported by two mountain batteries, one field battery, one troop of anti-tank battery and air support.[7] On the other hand the Azad troops comprised only of infantry. Another Indian brigade started advancing from Naushera towards Rajauri on 8 April and captured it on 12 April 1948. On night 24-25 May 1948, Indians tried to expand Jhanghar salient towards Tandar and captured area up to Khambah Fort. To stabilize the sector, it was decided to bring in Pakistan army's field and anti-aircraft guns in the sector. By end June 1948, a field battery, four 40 mm Bofors and two 20mm Oerlikons from Pakistan army were deployed near Puna.[8] With artillery available for the first time in this sector, Lt Col Afif Khan decided to liberate Jhanghar. The attack was planned on night 3-4 July 1948. At the given time, the field battery opened up at Indian positions at Jhanghar and surrounding areas. Brig Usman the Indian commander of 77 Brigade was among the casualties. This was the first time Indians had been subjected to artillery fire in this sector. Unfortunately, the attack itself was not successful.[9] The Indians immediately reinforced the sector with one medium battery for the counter bombardment to neutralize effects of the Pakistani field battery.[10] Due to heavy casualties and stiff resistance in Jhanghar sector, the Indians shifted their effort to Naushera-Bhimbar axis. From May 1948 till cease fire, the area South of Bhimbar i.e., Assar- Kabutar Gala was defended by 6/13 FF and 34 Azad Battalion.

The Poonch sector which had been surrounded by Azad troops by end October 1947 saw a lot of action during this period. On 20 November 1947, a relief column sent by Indians, from Uri to Poonch was ambushed en-route, but most of it managed to link up with Poonch garrison. The link up raised the morale of the besieged troops.


KASHMIR WAR 1948 - AZAD FORCES OFFENSIVE SOUTH OF PIR PANJAL
BAGH
RAWALA KOT
End Oct 47
PUNCH
SUDHNOTI
KOTLI
28 Nov 47
12 Nov 47
Contact estb on 25 Nov 47
6 Feb 48
23 Dec 47
6 Feb 48
Failed attempt to capture Naushera
25 Nov 47
6 Feb 48
Op Commences on 22 Oct 47
JHELUM
BHIMBAR
24 Oct 47

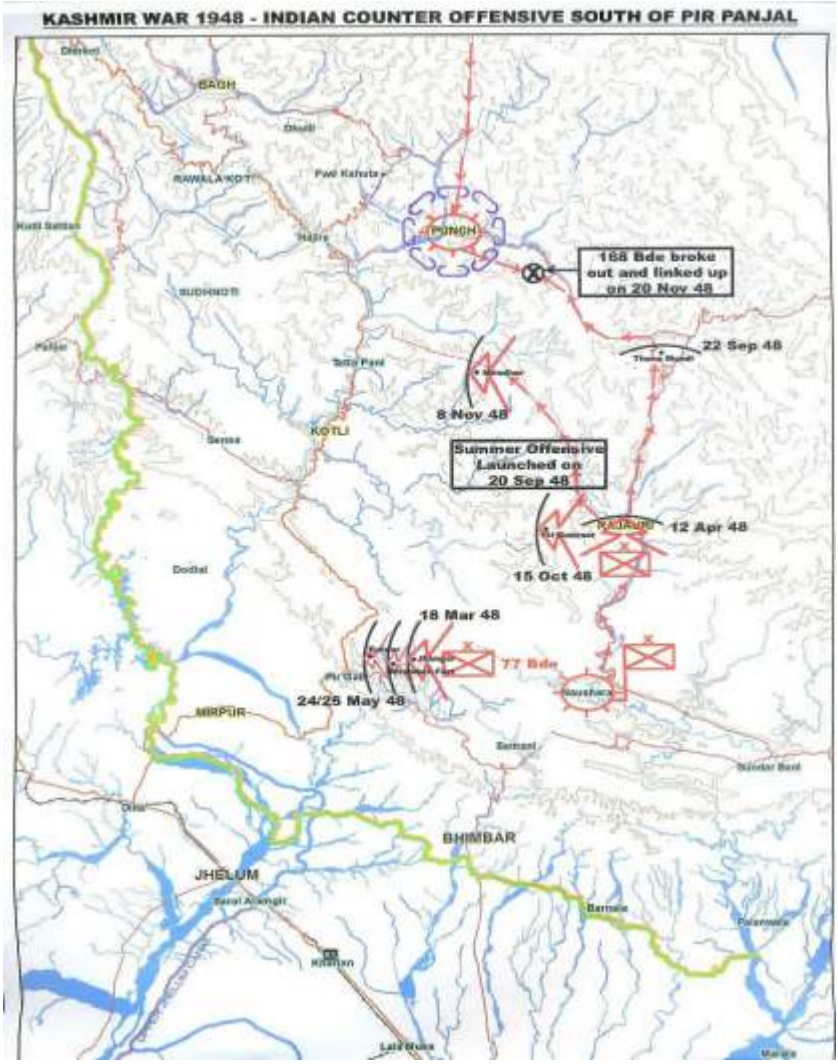
Map 1

Due to availability of an airstrip, the besieged garrison was constantly supplied and reinforced by air. They tried to break out on 1 January 1948 but failed. Second attempt on 8-9 February 1948 also failed and so did two more attempts. There were many attempts by Azad troops to capture Poonch but due to Indian artillery and air dominance none were successful. In the early months of 1948, Indians started reinforcing all the sectors including Poonch for summer offensive. In March 1948, Government of Pakistan decided to send some regular troops and a few pieces of artillery to this vital sector. Brig M. Haya ud Din of Pakistan Army was given the command of this sector. Apart from other troops, a mountain battery was deployed west of Betar Nullah. Brig Haya ud Din planned a three-pronged attack on Poonch on night 17 March 1948. The Indians reinforced the Poonch Garrison on night 17 March 1948 with two 25 pounder guns using their air force.[11] Initially the attack progressed well but later due to sudden heavy rainfall, the troops failed to reach their objectives. The next day, Indian Air Force started attacking Azad troops who were in the open and forced them to abandon the area captured the previous night. Meanwhile the Indian Air Force tried to reinforce the Poonch Garrison. Azad troop's artillery fire was directed at the airstrip. One Dakota aircraft was destroyed on the ground and another was damaged while trying to land. Thereafter, the Indian Air Force resorted only to air drop of supplies to Poonch Garrison. Because of the proximity of Azad troops to Indian defences, many a times the supplies fell in Azad territory.[12] On 24 March 1948, the Indian Army C-in-C, Gen Bucher, sent a signal to his Pakistani counterpart offering to evacuate Poonch.[13] This offer resulted in a one-sided, temporary cease fire by Azad troops. It provided much needed respite to the besieged troops. Instead of evacuating Poonch, Indians planned for its land link up. It resulted in the loss of Rajauri on 12 April 1948. Loss of Rajauri changed the entire situation in this sector by posing a potent threat to the rear of the besieging Azad troops. By the end of May 1948, a hastily raised 6 Azad Brigade took over the responsibility of defence of area between Rajauri and Poonch.[14] On night June 14-

15 an Indian force of two infantry battalions and a mountain battery left Rajauri, moved across Thana Mandi, into Suran river and reached Poonch without any resistance. The Azad defences in the area were immediately further strengthened. Some Indian units tried to break out from Poonch towards Rajauri but were repulsed. Now Poonch had two Indian brigade groups supported by integral artillery apart from air support. A troop of Pakistani mountain battery at Poonch was effectively interdicting Indian air supply. To remove artillery threat to the airstrip, Indians decided to push this mountain artillery troop out of airstrip range. In mid-July 1948, Indians launched an attack and captured Chajjah and lower portion of Chirikot feature. It forced the troop of mountain battery to withdraw into Hajira Valley. Poonch airstrip became safe for Indians and once again their planes started landing.

At this critical time, Lt Col Sadiq took over the command of Bagh Brigade which also controlled Poonch sector. To ensure effective siege of Poonch it was imperative to interdict its airstrip. Either Chajjah feature had to be recaptured or long-range artillery brought in. It was decided to do the both. To support an attack on Chajjah, one 6 pounder anti-tank gun was sent to the sector. To interdict the Poonch airstrip, one 25 pounder gun was dispatched. The guns reached Sehr on 13 August 1948 and were reassembled inside strong bunkers. They were ready to fire on 14 August 1948 i.e., the first anniversary of Independence Day of Pakistan.[15]

The Indians had two mountain batteries and a troop of field guns (25 pounders) in Poonch. Indian defences at Chajjah were strongly built. The attack was launched on 27 August 1948. Attack by two companies of 4/14 Punjab did not succeed due to concentrated enemy artillery and mortar fire.[16] On 6 September the 25-pounder gun opened fire on a Dakota unloading at Poonch airstrip. The aircraft immediately took off. The airfield was once again rendered unusable. Once again, the Indians resorted to supplies by parachute.



Map 2

Indian offensive from Rajauri to link up with Poonch started on 20 September 1948. Thana Mandi was captured on 22 September. To protect the western flank of Rajauri, Pir Badesar

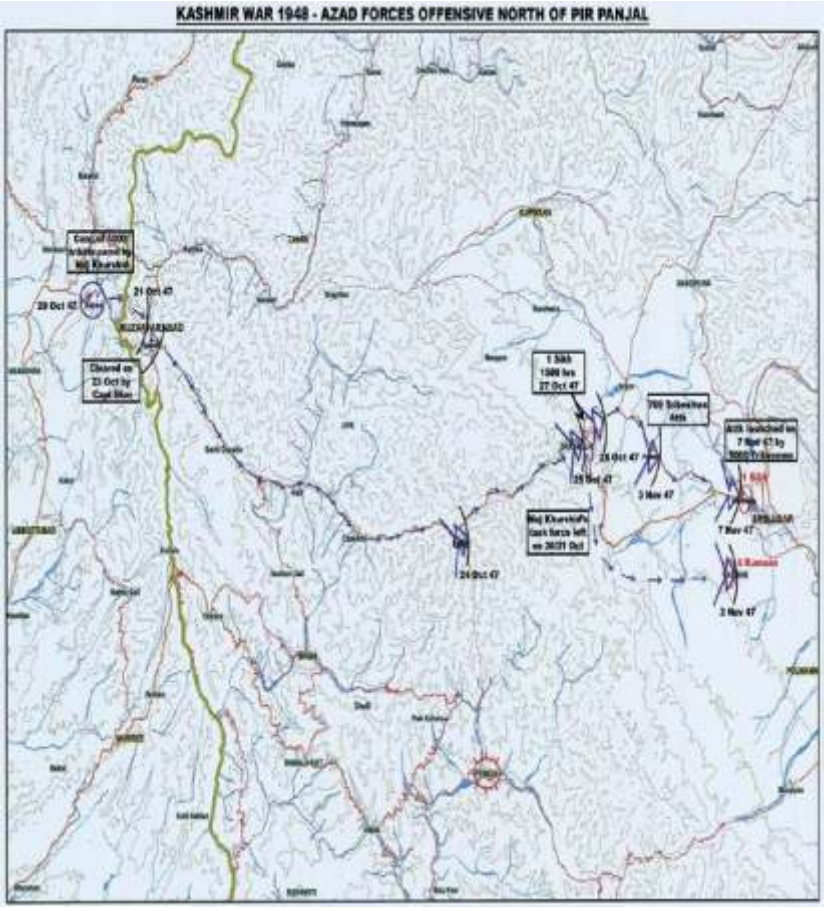
feature was captured on 15 October 1948. By 5 November 1948, Indians had an infantry division of three brigades, two troops of light-tanks and three field and one mountain battery of artillery in position at Rajauri.[17] Opposing them, 25 Brigade Headquarters commanded by Brig Azam, with only two regular infantry companies was given command of the sector on 26 October 1948. Two depleted Azad Kashmir brigades i.e., 6 and Hydari were placed under command 25 Brigade.[18] The Indian offensive with two brigades leading, on a broad front, started on night 6-7 November 1948. By 8 November, they had captured Bhimber Gali. Due to resistance in front of 19 Indian Brigade operating in Mendhar sector, they shifted their troops to the north to 5 Indian Brigade areas where resistance was less. On 19 November 1948, 5 and 19 Indian Brigades attacked towards north and 168 Brigade in Poonch broke out in the South and affected a link up on 20 November 1948. That was the end of major operations South of Pirpanjal range till ceasefire on 1 January 1949.

OPERATIONS IN JHELUM-NEELUM SECTOR

Approximately 5000 tribesmen had collected at Batrasi, between Abbotabad and Balakot (Muzaffarabad) by 20 October 47. Maj Khurshid Anwar, a retired Indian Army officer and now commander of the Pakistan Muslim League National guards undertook to lead the tribesmen.

4 J&K Infantry battalion of Kashmir state forces was headquartered at Muzaffarabad with companies spread over a large area. Captain Azam and Sher Khan, the two company commanders of 4 J&K were in contact with Maj Khurshid. The bridge at Muzaffarabad was crossed at 6 am on 21 October, with captain Sher Khan leading the column. The City was liberated the same day. Domel was cleared by troops led by Captain Sher on 23 October. Uri was captured on 24 October and the next day the tribals were at Baramula. After five days of advance and fighting and due to lack of logistics, the tribals rested on 26 Oct. The tribals demanded better logistics. Maj Khurshid held a Jirga and tried to

convince them of the need to reach Srinagar as quickly as possible. However, the same day i.e., 26 October, the Maharaja of Kashmir signed an instrument of accession with India.[19] At 9:15 am on 27 October, C Company along with the battalion tactical HQ of the 1 Sikh regiment of Indian Army landed at Srinagar Airport. At the airport they were received by the acting commander of the State Forces and officials of civil administration.



Map 3

They were briefed and provided civilian transport. D company landed at 2:30 pm. By 3 pm, 27 October, troops of 1 Sikh regiment along with mortars were deployed 2 kilometres east of Baramula.[20] It is surprising how Indian army troops started landing at Srinagar airport even before the instrument of accession was signed by the Indian Governor General Mountbatten. While Raja of Kashmir signed the document in the evening of 26 October, Mountbatten signed it in routine on 27 October. The instrument of accession became a legal document only after it was signed by Indian Governor General. Thus, India started its military invasion of Kashmir much before instrument of accession attained legal status. Initiating a two-service military operation of this magnitude is not possible within hours of signing the instrument of accession unless the operation was already planned and preparations were in an advance stage.

In Second World all such operations took months to launch. A close look at the instrument of accession would reveal that it was typed in August 1947. The Raja as well as Mountbatten struck off typed August with their pens in green ink and wrote October in their own hand writing. This is an ample proof that the document was typed in August and plan of Indian invasion was well advanced. India was fully prepared to militarily occupy Kashmir. Instrument of accession was just a farce and a smoke screen to cover their illegal military conquest of Muslim majority state of Jammu and Kashmir. Even the instrument of accession did not cede sovereign rights to India. Indian Prime minister Nehru and Mountbatten are on record of having declared that future of Kashmir would be decided as per the wishes of people of Kashmir. Their promises are yet to be realized.

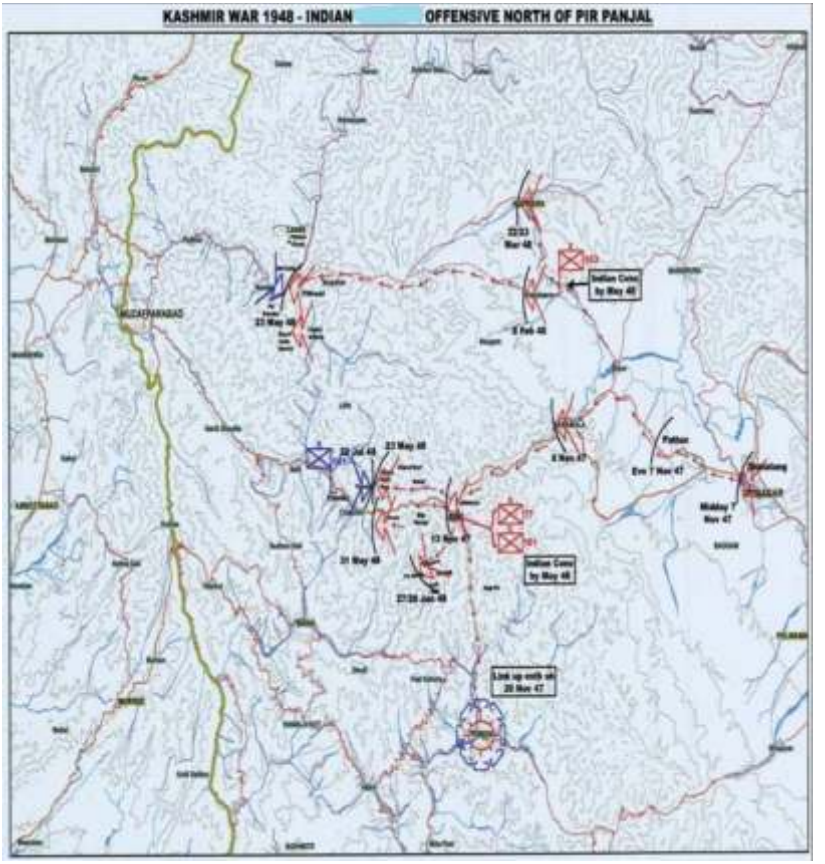
On 28 October, the tribals attacked the Indian troops. Lt Col Rai, the CO of 1 Sikh was killed around 4 pm. Under pressure, the Sikh battalion withdrew to Shalateng spill channel (7 kilometres west of Srinagar) by 11pm. Realising that they had not been followed, a decision was taken at midnight to advance once again

to Pattan. The unit was deployed at Pattan by 5 am on 29 October. About 700 tribesmen attacked Indian position at Pattan on 30 October. The attack failed due to strong Indian air support. As Indian Air Force had caused a lot of casualties and was the main reason of failure of attack at Pattan, Maj Khurshid decided to outflank Indian positions from the south and head straight for Badgam airport to neutralise Indian air. On night 30-31 October, Maj Khurshid and Maj Sher along with 500 troops left for Badgam. They reached Badgam on 3 November and came across a hastily deployed company of 4 Kumaon. They launched an attack and routed it. The same day Maj Aslam attacked the Sikh battalion at Pattan and forced it to withdraw to Shalateng.

By 5 November, Indian 161 Brigade had four infantry battalions, one mountain battery with 3.7-inch guns, one machine gun company and a squadron of tanks ex 7 cavalry.[21] This force with air support was far superior to tribal and Azad troops. The freedom fighters collected about 5000 troops and launched an attack on 7 November. Starting at 5:30 am, it came to an almost standstill by noon. Now Indians counter attacked with an infantry battalion from the southern flank supported by air, artillery and a squadron armour. Indian firepower was so overwhelming that despite high morale, freedom fighters were defeated. They suffered casualties in hundreds and left the battlefield in shock. They were closely followed by the Indian army. By the evening of 7 November, the Sikh battalion was at Pattan. By the next evening i.e., 8 November, Baramula was lost. Uri was lost by 13 November.[22] The defeat at Shalateng sealed the fate of Kashmir. After this battle, the strategic initiative passed on to the Indians.

There was an operational pause by the Indians till 20 November, during which the Freedom Fighters managed to strengthen their defences around Indian army at Uri. On 20 November, an Indian battalion strong relief column started from Uri and after crossing Hajipir pass linked up with Poonch. Its vehicle column was ambushed en-route and destroyed. The Azad troops decided to wrest the initiative once again in this sector. In

the first week of January 48, approximately 2000 Kashmiri and Pathan troops were assembled in Jhelum valley. They infiltrated the Indians defences to capture Mahura, a small-town East of Uri. Due to heavy snow and poor logistics, it failed. The troops were pulled back on 23 January.[23]



Map 4

During winters of 47-48, the Indians remained on the defensive, preparing for a summer offensive. Maj Gen Thimayya, the GOC of 19 Indian Division in Srinagar, had concentrated two

brigades at Uri (77 and 161) and one brigade (163) at Hindwara by May 48.[24]

To defend against Indian summer offensive, Pakistani Government decided to induct regular army in Kashmir in May 48. 101 Brigade ex 7 Division, with three battalions, under Brig Akbar Khan was tasked to defend area from Tithwal to Poonch. Maj Gen Thimayya decided to launch his brigade sized auxiliary effort in Hindwara-Tithwal- Muzaffarabad axis and two brigade's main effort along Jhelum valley axis.

The British Commander in Chief of Pakistan army who had refused to intervene in Kashmir in October 1947 agreed to do so in May 1948. It was seven months too late. By this time the initiative had passed to Indians.

Maj Sher had been operating in the Hindwara area since November 47. He had captured Hindwara on 2 February 48. It was recaptured by Indians on 8 February.[25] Kupwada and Shulur were captured by Indians on 22-23 March 48.[26] In May 48, 163 Indian infantry Brigade consisted of 5 infantry battalions, artillery and a squadron of armoured cars. 163 Brigade started its offensive on 19 May and on 23 May captured Tithwal. Alarmed by this new threat to Muzaffarabad, Pakistan inducted 10 Brigade to defend Neelum valley on 23 May. 10 Brigade had three infantry battalions and a mountain battery. 163 Brigade resumed its advance on 25 May and by night captured point 7229 by one infantry battalion. It was a dominating feature north of river Neelum. A mountain battery of 1 Mountain regiment was ordered to move on 26 May from Abbotabad.

It reached Muzaffarabad by motor transport by 9 pm. From Muzaffarabad onwards the battery moved on a very narrow track on mules at night. A gun position was selected at Nauseri on 2 June 48. Meanwhile, on 31 May, Indians captured Pir Sahaba feature south of the river. Point 7229 was dominating all movement in Neelum valley, therefore it was decided to recapture it. An attack by two companies of 5/12 FF was launched on 11

June. The attack failed.[27] Another attack after a few days also failed due to ineffective artillery fire as enemy defences were based on a narrow ridge. After lengthy discussion it was decided that artillery be used in direct fire role to achieve accuracy. One gun had to be carried to point 9444 i.e., almost 2000 ft above enemy position at point 7229. Engineers pulled a steel rope with a sling and a pulley across the river. One gun was dismantled and each part transported to north of the river with the steel rope pulley.

200 porters took the gun and 200 rounds to point 9444 in two days i.e., a climb of 6000 feet. The royal treatment given to the gun earned it the name of "Shahzadi."[28] The attack by 4/16 Punjab under Lt Col Nausherwan was launched at 5 am on 8 July. The Shahzadi started picking up enemy bunkers one by one. The Indians deserted the position leaving behind 30 dead and 13 prisoners.[29] Phase one of the attack was a complete success. Phase 2 was planned at 8 pm on 9 July. The Indians had vacated Point 7229 feature the previous night and had blown the bridge on the river. As Pir Sahaba feature was dominated by Point 7229, Indians vacated it as well on 9 July. The last major attack in Neelum sector was launched by Indians on 17-18 July to capture Baniwala Danna. It failed because of stiff resistance by the defenders.

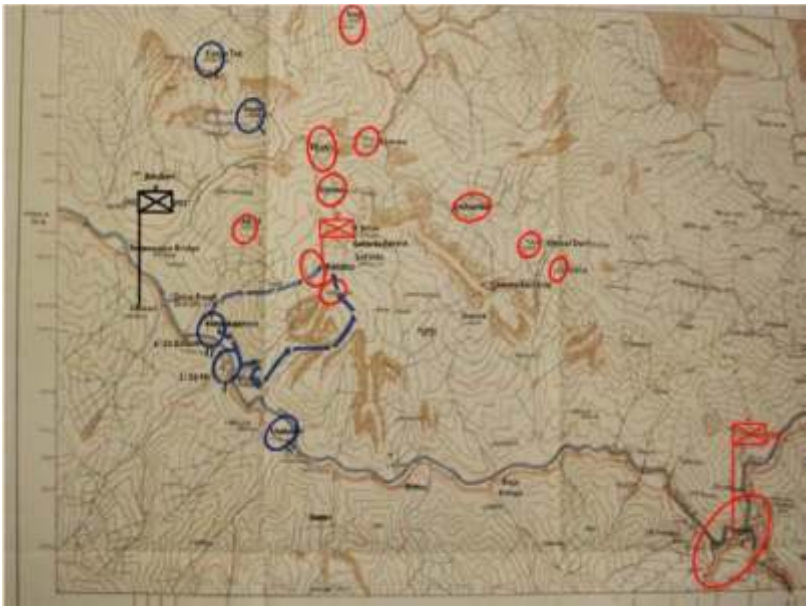
In Jhelum valley, the Indians concentrated two brigades having eleven infantry battalions for the main effort to capture Muzaffarabad. The newly brought in 77 Brigade relieved 161 Brigade from defence of Uri. 161 Brigade had 4 infantry battalions, one squadron of armoured cars ex 7 Cavalry, one mountain battery and two field batteries. It was tasked to launch the main offensive in Jhelum valley.[30] One battalion (4 Kamaon) was tasked to advance along Mahura - Chota Kazi Nag and Pandu. One battalion with squadron armoured cars was to advance along the main road Uri-Chakothi. The rest of the two battalions were to advance along ridge lines south of the river.[31] Probing attacks started on 12 May, 48.[32] On the Pakistani side, apart from

Kashmiri irregulars and Pathan Lashkars, there was one infantry battalion i.e., 1/13 FF supported by four 4.2-inch mortars and a section of 3.7-inch guns of 1 Mountain Regiment. The sector was under 101 Brigade which was looking after an entire area from Poonch to Tithwal. Main offensive by the Indians started on 20 May 48.[33] On night 20-21 May, 4 Kumaon captured Chinal Dori peak.[34] On 23 May Neelum sector was handed over to 10 Brigade leaving 101 Brigade to defend only the Jhelum valley. 101 Brigade was reinforced with another infantry battalion. The same day, Chota Kazi Nag was lost to 4 Kumaon.[35] On 23 May, Pandu feature was lost.[36] At this time, 77 Brigade was inducted by the Indians to exploit success along Pandu ridge. However due to stiff resistance, it failed to achieve much.[37]

On 25 May, a battery of 3 (SP) Field Regiment (25 pounders) and a section of 8 Medium Regiment were rushed to the Jhelum valley.[38] On 31 May, Indian 161 Brigade attacked Chakothi with 8 armoured cars and four light tanks. Two 3.7-inch guns firing in anti-tank role knocked out three leading armoured cars. The attack failed. While withdrawing, two more armoured cars fell in the river.[39] Due to failure north of the river and along the valley road, 161 Brigade shifted the weight of its offensive along the mountain ridge south of the river. Three battalions were tasked to attack Pirkanti and Ledigali. On 21 June first attack failed. On night 27/28 June Pirkanti and on 28 June Ledigali were lost.[40] A mountain battery was immediately moved from Poonch to Pirkanti sector.[41] One 3.7-inch gun of 1 Mountain Regiment was dismantled and moved to Pirkanti sector, a climb of 10000 ft.[42] On night 29-30 June, 2/1 Punjab less one company was shifted from north to south of the river to reinforce the sector.[43] Induction of artillery and a fresh infantry battalion stabilised the sector and there was no further loss of territory.

Having defeated the Indian offensive, Brigadier Akbar Khan, Commander 101 Brigade decided to recapture Pandu feature as it overlooked Chakothi defences in the valley. 4/10 Baloch under Lt Col Sher Bahadur was tasked for this mission. He was allotted

three additional companies, some FC troops, three tribal lashkars of 200 men each and a platoon of engineers. Fire support was to be provided by 3 Mountain Battery, a troop of 3 (SP) Mountain Regiment and one section of 8 Medium Regiment. It was planned that one 3.7-inch mountain gun would be carried to Pandu top as soon as it was captured.



Map 5

Pandu Sketch. Source: Archive for the 'British Empire and its Deeds[44]

The attack was to start on 19 July 48.[45] Pandu was about 6.5 kilometres in the rear of the frontline. The most critical part of the operation was to infiltrate enemy defences, move in enemy area for 2 nights and one day, climb 6000 feet and then attack the objective and still achieve surprise. Starting early night 19 July, the force spent the day of 20 July at Kotla Rajkhwah. Here the force split into two pre-planned columns. Two companies under Maj Afridi headed for Pandu peak. Rest of the force under Lt Col

Sher Bahadur left for Pandu village i.e., the main objective. Maj Afridi's column reached the foot of Pandu peak at 4:45 am on 22 July. Indians at Pandu peak were surprised by the appearance of Maj Afridi's force and vacated their position after little resistance. Pandu peak was captured by 6 am on 22 July.[46]

The main column under Lt Col Sher Bahadur however met stiff resistance near Pandu village. After some reorganization, the main force formed up for attack on Pandu village at 8 am on 22 July. After preparatory fire, the battalion attacked Pandu village at 8:30 am. The attack failed to make any headway. Second attack at 9:30 am again failed. The Indians launched two counter attacks but were beaten back. Under pressure, Lt Col Sher Bahadur withdrew his force to point 6873 on the evening of 22 July.[47] On night 21-22 July, 2/12 FF less two companies were ordered to reinforce Maj Afridi's force. By evening 23 July, they reached Pandu peak. Surrounded from almost all sides and getting punished by artillery fire, the Indians decided to vacate Pandu feature on the morning of 24 July. Indians fired almost 2000 artillery rounds to help their troops evacuate Pandu village defences. Before 2/12 FF could launch attack on night 24-25 July, it was noticed that there was no movement in Pandu village. On the morning of 25 July, the village was secured. The capture of Pandu feature was a big success for Pakistan army.[48] After the capture of Pandu, 2/12 FF with additional troops was ordered to clear Chota Kazi Nag and Chinal Dori. Attacks launched on both the objectives on 25 July only managed to capture areas up to the forward slopes of these features.[49]

As part of the main attack on Pandu, Brig Akbar ordered 2/1 Punjab to capture Point 9108 and cut off line of communications of the Indian position at Pirkanthi, both south of river Jhelum. 2/1 Punjab was reinforced with additional troops and fire support was to be provided by a section of 1 Mountain Regiment. Indians were very sensitive to the loss of Tilpatra and Point 9108 as their positions at Pirkanthi and Ledigali were logistically dependent on this route. The attack was launched on night 26-27 July. Due to

heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire, the attack failed. However, this attack produced the first Nishan-e-Haider i.e., highest award for bravery in Pakistan Armed Forces for Captain Sarwar Shaheed of 2/1 Punjab.[50]

Indian positions at Pirkanthi and Ledigali were being maintained at a great disadvantage as their line of communication was long and exposed to interdiction by Pakistani troops. Pakistani troops carried out many raids at these two positions inflicting heavy casualties. By early December, Pir Panjal range was covered with thick snow which made it difficult for Indians to maintain their troops at Pirkanthi and Ledigali. Indians started thinning out their troops from both these positions in December 48. Before the ceasefire, they vacated Pirkanthi and Ledigali and withdrew towards Urusa in the Jhelum valley.[51]

OPERATIONS IN NORTHERN AREAS (GILGIT-BALTISTAN)

On 1st August 47, the British decided to hand over administrative control of Gilgit Baltistan (GB) to the Maharaja of Kashmir. It alarmed the Muslim population. Maharaja nominated Brig Ghansara Singh as governor of Northern Areas. He arrived in Gilgit in early August 47. 6 Jammu and Kashmir Infantry Battalion of the State troops, having 2 Muslim and 2 Dogra companies was stationed at Gilgit with its companies spread over a large area. It was commanded by Lt Col Abdul Majid Khan. Lt Col Abdul Majid, Captain Hasan and Subedar Maj Babur of Gilgit Scouts planned a revolt against the Maharaja of Kashmir in case he did not join Pakistan.[52] On 26 October, with the accession of Kashmir with India, the worst fears of Muslims of the region came true. The revolt started on 31 October 47 with the arrest of the Dogra Governor at Gilgit. Captain Hasan secured Bunji. Astor was cleared by 3 November 47 by Captain Jarral. The Indian government immediately sent reinforcements to Skardu and raised its strength to almost a battalion. Maj Aslam, the commandant of Gilgit Scouts was alarmed. He created a 250 strong force out of

Gilgit Scouts under Maj Ihsan, named it "Ibex Column" and sent it to Skardu. Covering an extremely difficult terrain on foot, Maj Ihsan attacked Skardu on 11-12 February 48. Due to strong defences and availability of almost 3 months to the defenders to prepare their position, the attack was not successful. A relief column sent by India was ambushed between Skardu and Gol on 17 March 48 and destroyed. Another attempt by Maj Ihsan to capture Skardu failed on 26 March.[53] Thereafter, the Indians decided to send bigger relief force. Z Brigade comprising 5 and 7 Kashmir light Infantry battalions was assembled at Kargil on 1 April 48. Moving very cautiously they reached Parkutta on 18 April. Maj Jarral moved out to stop the Indian relief column as far from Skardu as was possible. On 20 April, contact with the Indians was made. Starting with minor skirmishes, the Azad troops started launching major raids on Z Brigade from 10 May onwards. By 15 May the Indian relief column came to know about fall of Dras and Kargil. After suffering many casualties, Indians started withdrawing. On 20 May a major attack was launched at Kharmang on the withdrawing Indian troops resulting in the destruction of Z Brigade.

Now the story of how Dras and Kargil were captured by Azad troops. By early April 48, Maj Aslam the Commandant of Gilgit scouts was facing a dilemma. Out of 600 Gilgit Scouts, 400 had already left for Skardu in "lbex Column". Out of additional 2000 volunteers, he could arm only 600. Thus, he had 700 poorly armed soldiers. They had no air, artillery or logistics support. The Indians were already making serious efforts to relieve Skardu along Kargil, Indus valley route. He knew that with the opening of passes in early summers, Indians would use Burzil pass also and after the capture of Skardu would threaten Gilgit from Astor and Indus valley routes.

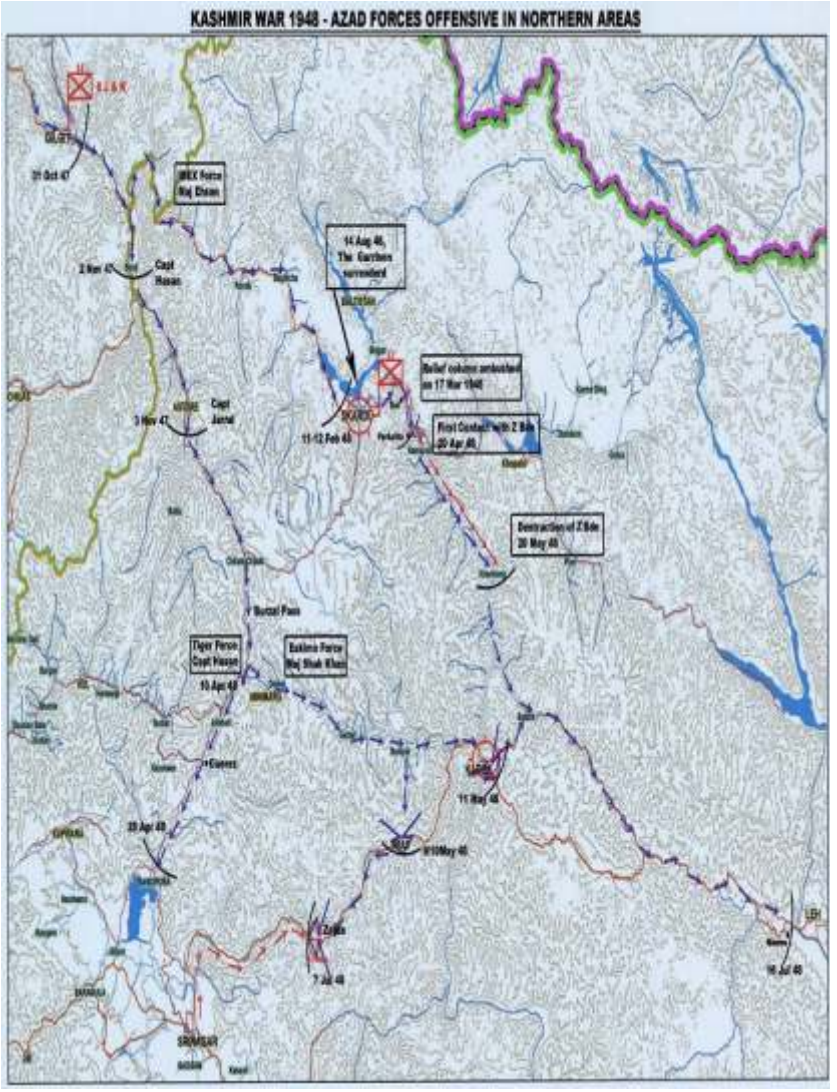
With only 700 soldiers he stood no chance to defend the vast expanse of Northern Areas. The solution he found was a strategic masterstroke, an audacious plan and a desperate but calculated risk. He planned to leave100 soldiers at Gilgit and employ 600 to

capture strategically important places in the enemy rear. The 600 were to march from Gilgit to Chilam i.e., a distance of 120 miles (192 kilometres). From Chilam, 250 scouts, under Capt. Hasan were to contact Indians at Bandipura, a distance of another 130 miles (208 kilometres) to create the auxiliary effect of containment, distraction and preventing reinforcement of the main sector of Dras-Kargil. The main force of 350 scouts would march from Chilam to Dras and Kargil i.e., another 120 miles (192 km). This force had to move on man pack basis, on goat tracks, on average height of 14000 feet, over almost 15 feet deep snow and in the day, below freezing temperatures. Starting on 10 April, Capt. Hasan's 250 Scouts were at Bandipura on 28 April. The Indians were taken by complete surprise. The purpose of this move was achieved as the reserve battalion at Srinagar was immediately sent to Bandipura. The main force of 350 scouts started from Chilam on 30 April. On night 9-10 May, Dras and Kargil were attacked. Kargil was captured the next day and Dras was cleared by 6 June. The surprise was so complete that it was not until 25 May that "one Indian battalion (1 Patiala) supported by a battery of 11 Field Regiment (25 pounders)" moved out of Srinagar. They took up defences at Zoji La Pass.[54]

The Indians had fallen in the trap laid by Maj Aslam and took threat at Bandipura as the main threat to Srinagar. While they sent one battalion to Zoji La, they reacted with a brigade supported by a mountain battery at Bandipura. This brigade captured Gurez by 29 June.[55] Valuable force and time were thus spent in a wrong direction against an axillary threat.

In June 48, a force of 400 Chitral Scouts with two 3.7"guns reached Skardu. By now the Scouts had about thirty 3 inch and 4.2-inch mortars captured from Indians. [56] After the capture of Kargil and destruction of Z Brigade, some troops from Skardu joined the troops at Kargil. They were re-organised. One Company under Lt Babur was sent along the Indus River towards

Leh. By 16 July, he had captured Nimu which was a few kilometres short of Leh.



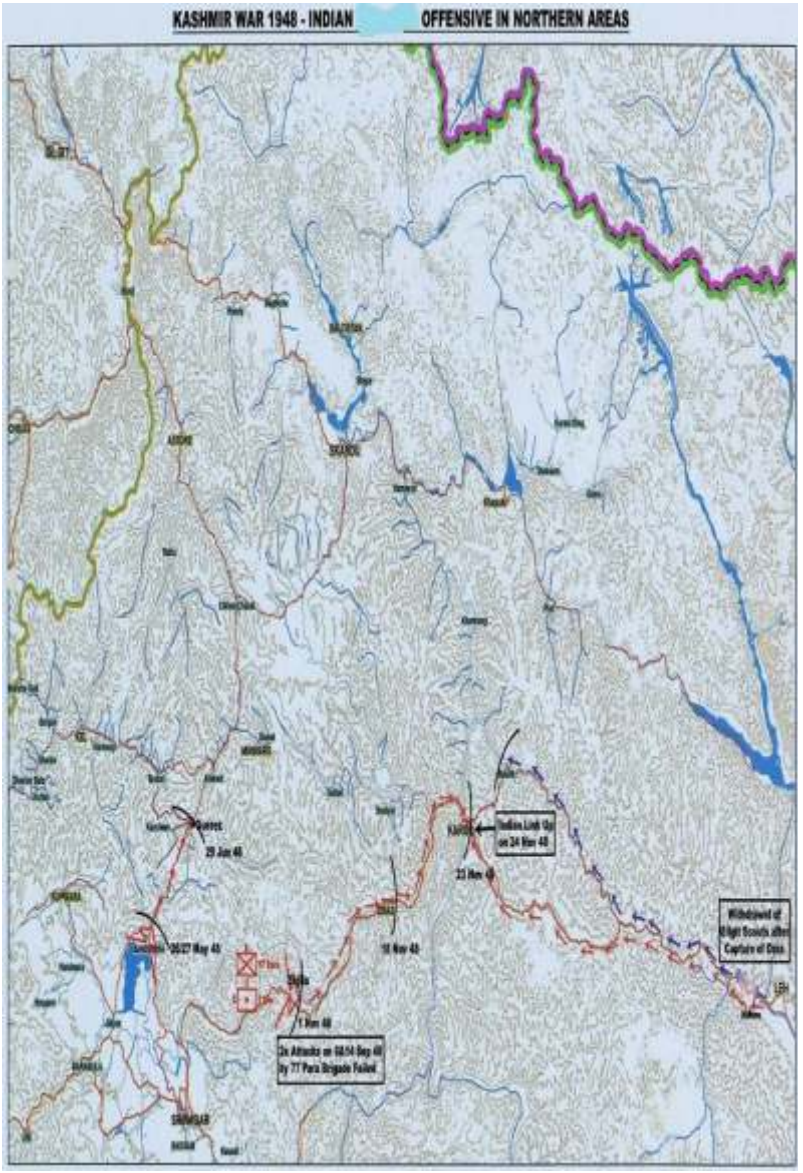
Map 6

Capture of the Zoji La pass was important for defence of Dras-Kargil. On June 12, Maj Jarral started attacking Zoji La pass. By 7 July he cleared it. While scouts were clearing Zoji La pass, Indians were putting all their effort in clearing Gurez. Maj Aslam's plans had met complete success. By mid-July, almost entire Northern Areas had been liberated.

By mid-August, Col Thapa, commander of besieged troops at Skardu realised the hopelessness of his situation. Two relief columns had been defeated. Dras-Kargil had been lost to Gilgit scouts and the besieging troops had been reinforced specially with two 3.7-inch guns. On 14 August 1948, the Skardu Garrison surrendered.[57] Troops relieved from Skardu were immediately sent to forward lines at Kargil, Zoji La and Nimu near Leh. The Indians tried to outflank Zoji La pass defences in third week of August but failed. Starting 31 August, the Indians subjected the defences to one week of air and artillery bombardment. On 6 September, Indian 77 Para Brigade launched an attack. Due to stiff resistance the attack failed. Second attack by the same brigade group, launched on 14 September also failed. "Indian casualties in these attacks were 62 killed, 77 injured and 33 missing."[58] Lulled by their successes and coming winters, the defenders decided to send troops on leave. The defences were therefore thinned out. The sector was supported by only two 3.7-inch guns which had last seen action at Skardu. The Indians having learnt their lessons from two failures in September, decided to widen the track to Zoji La, increase the strength of 77 Para Brigade to four infantry battalions and to employ C Squadron, 7 Cavalry having Stuart light tanks in the attack.

The brigade plus attack, supported by two field batteries (25 pounders) and one mountain battery[59] and led by light tanks was launched on 1 November 48. It succeeded in capturing the pass. Indians then exploited their success, captured Dras by 18 November and Kargil by 23 November. Gilgit Scouts operating against Leh, due to threat to their line of communication at Kargil,

immediately withdrew along Indus and Shyok valleys. Cease fire was imposed on 1 January 49.



Map 7

The masterstroke of the Kashmir War was Maj Aslam's capture of Dras and Kargil with only 600 men. By taking the Battle of Summer of 1948 to areas held by the enemy, he forced Indians to spend all their efforts to recapture Gurez, Dras and Kargil and thus ensuring that bulk of Northern Areas remain independent. It not only saved the Northern Areas (now Gilgit - Baltistan) but also exerted pull on Indian forces elsewhere especially in Neelum-Jhelum valleys from where 77 Indian Brigade was pulled out for operations in Dras - Kargil area. Unfortunately, the superhuman and heroic sacrifices of those brave 600 are almost forgotten in Pakistan. They deserved a monument, a drama serial highlighting their exploits, a poem, a movie or at least study periods by the Pakistan army to keep their achievements and memories alive.

OPERATION VENUS

Last few major operations by Pakistan Army were conducted in July 48 in Neelum and Jhelum sectors. UN, vide their resolution of 13 August 1948, had called for an immediate ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir.[60] Thereafter, Pakistan exercised restraint. However, India took advantage of Pakistan's restraint. In October-November, India launched two major operations and linked up with Poonch and Leh. It created a lot of alarm in Pakistan. India by linking up with Leh and Poonch had released a lot of troops and was now threateningly poised to exploit their success by further operations towards Bagh, Rawalakot or Kotli. Elements of Indian army and Air force which were not yet committed in Kashmir were concentrated at Amritsar and Ferozepur along West Pakistan border. On November 16, Pakistan Army decided to move as much of its force as was possible to Bhimber and Gujrat. Consequently, 14 Para Brigade consisting of 5 infantry battalions and a cavalry unit were moved from Lahore to Kotla and placed under command 7 Division. A newly raised brigade was sent to Tithwal to relieve 10 Brigade, which was brought to Rawalpindi as GHQ reserve.[61]

Detailed plan for the final counter stroke named Operation

Venus was ready. It was to be preceded by a preliminary operation called 'Little Venus'. Little Venus was to be launched on 8 December aimed at capture of Reechh and Maindak features so as to dominate road to Naushera. It was to be followed by the main Venus aimed at "destruction by concentrated artillery fire of Beri Pattan Bridge, deliberate and systematic destruction of enemy positions north of Sadabad valley and harassing of Naushera and the main road leading to it.

As soon as Indians picked up preparations for operation Venus, they threatened to attack Pakistan in Sialkot and Lahore sectors. Pakistan army was left with one brigade at Malir and one each at Lahore and Sialkot for defence of rest of West Pakistan. Pakistan had thus taken an enormous risk to launch operation Venus. The implications were discussed in detail by the cabinet. Threat posed by Indian force concentrated at Amritsar and Ferozepur was too potent to be ignored. It was therefore decided by the Government of Pakistan NOT to launch operation Little Venus.

Indian air reconnaissance had picked up new tracks to the gun areas along with bulk of troop concentration. Commencing on 10 December, Indian Air and artillery started intense shelling and strafing of areas south of Reechh and Maindak feature. On 14 December when Indian activities were becoming unbearable, the artillery was finally ordered to execute Operation Venus. The guns opened up at 10 am on 14 December on the pre- selected targets and according to the prepared fire plan.

Medium Battery, firing at maximum range hit the Beri Pattan Bridge. One of the spans fell, thus bringing to a stop all movement on the road. An Indian convoy of about 60 vehicles which was approaching the bridge was engaged and many vehicles were set on fire. For the next two days, despite Indian Air and artillery fire the Beri Pattan Bridge and Naushera were kept under intermittent harassing fire, paralysing all Indian activities in the area.[62] "Operation Venus triggered a strong reaction in India. Indian Generals considered that the only effective response would be to

drive Pakistani forces back into Pakistan. Nehru conveyed to Attlee that India considered itself free to take any suitable action to check this aggression where ever necessary."[63] Gen Bucher the Indian Army Chief, telephoned Gen Mckay, the Chief of staff of the Pakistan Army on 17 December and got the assurance that artillery firing would stop immediately. The Indian Government got so unnerved by operation Venus that Nehru ordered Gen Bucher to consider attacking Pakistani territory towards Wazirabad or Sialkot.[64] Starting on 14 December, operation Venus came to an end on 17 December. It created strategic effects. Indian Government realising the resolve of Pakistan to defend its interests decided to agree for a ceasefire with effect from 1 January 1949. Pakistani Government also agreed to UN resolution because it demanded resolution of Kashmir as per the wishes of the people of Kashmir to be determined through plebiscite. Till then, all Muslim majority areas where referendums were held (NWFP and Sylhet) had opted for Pakistan. It was a foregone conclusion that in any plebiscite, Kashmir would opt for Pakistan. Even Indian government knew it and never allowed any plebiscite. Even today, (2017) i.e., after 70 years, Indians are not ready to hold plebiscite.

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CHAPTER 2

INTER WAR PERIOD 1949–65 AND 1965 WAR

ENVIRONMENT FROM 1949 TO 1955

Regional and International environment from 1949 to mid-fifties had influenced the later decisions of Pakistani leadership. These decisions shaped the future events and destiny of Pakistan.

In 1949, Pakistan was still in shock due to more than a year long war with India. The outcome of the war had been unfavourable to Pakistan as the most important parts of Jammu and Kashmir had been occupied militarily by India. At the time of independence, Indian Muslims had no doubt about Kashmir becoming part of Pakistan. The outcome of the war scared Pakistan, as decision in Kashmir had been imposed by force of arms. India had captured Junagarh with the help of its armed forces on 9 November 1947, despite the fact that the ruler had legally acceded to Pakistan. In Kashmir the logic given by India was that the ruler had acceded to India, while in Junagarh the logic to use force by India was that it was a Hindu majority area. The state of Hyderabad Deccan, almost equal in size of modern-day France, was invaded and captured by Indian Armed Forces on 17 September l948. Indian military might was creating new facts in the Subcontinent and the world was accepting it as fait accompli. India had even threatened the core areas of Pakistan by concentrating its army opposite Lahore and Sialkot in 1948 and in 1951.

It was hardly five years back that World War II had ended, in which the use of armed forces had changed many international borders and created or captured many a country. Might was being taken as right and force of arms was an accepted method of settling international conflicts.

The concept of settling conflicts through wars and naked military aggression by India in Kashmir, Junagarh and Hyderabad Deccan had its sobering effect on the leadership of Pakistan. Instead of being a peaceful neighbour, India had emerged as the biggest threat to the very existence of Pakistan. First the belligerent attitude of Hindu majority had forced the Indian Muslims to opt for a separate country and later their military threats forced Pakistan to seek refuge by joining the anti-Communist military pacts under the US stewardship, although Pakistan had no threat from Communism. The tragedy of the Subcontinent has been and still is that India, due to its short-sightedness, has condemned almost a billion and a half people to highly polarised, militarised, extremist and nuclearized future.

For USA in early 50's, communism had emerged as a main threat to their values. World War two had ended in 1945 with whole of Eastern Europe becoming communist under Soviet occupation. Soon afterward in 1949, the Chinese communists defeated the US supported nationalist government of Chiang Kai-shek. Thereafter in 1950, the communist North Korea had attacked South Korea. Communism appeared to be aggressively expanding in the world.

"The first post-independence government of India did not agree with the US world view. Nehru told Truman that colonialism and not the communism was the main threat to the world peace. The US government was suspicious of Nehru's tilt towards communist Russia and China.[1] "The French were fighting a losing battle in Vietnam against communists. Thus, it appeared that communism was becoming the winning ideology in the world. That US, despite being the biggest economy of the world with the best technology, felt threatened and resolved to use all its might to fight back. The USA was looking for allies in its fight against communism and Pakistan was looking for a strong ally to protect itself against Indian threat. At that time, Soviet Union was still recovering economically from the ravages of Second World War and its technology was of no comparison with that the of USA.

For Pakistan, US willingness to arm its forces was a God sent opportunity. Pakistan therefore joined US led alliance.

As already explained in the chapter on Kashmir war, Pakistan army entered Kashmir in May 1948. Soon it was realised that existing strength of Pakistan army could not influence the battle in Kashmir as well as defend the rest of the Pakistan. During Operation VENUS (Kashmir war, December 1948) bulk of Pakistan army was employed in Kashmir and rest of the country was left with only a weak force. India concentrated its troops on international borders in Punjab and threatened Pakistan to cancel Operation Venus or face Indian military aggression. Government of Pakistan had to cancel the operation once they realised that Pakistan army was not in a position to defend against the possible Indian offensive across international borders. This realisation later forced the government to raise new units to avoid being blackmailed by India in future.

From January 1949 to 1952 i.e., in almost three years, the size of Pakistan army was almost doubled. Indian naked aggression in Kashmir in 1947-48 had forced the new state of Pakistan to invest heavily in defence. Pakistan army became guarantor of Pakistan's sovereignty and thus the importance attached to it. Indian greed and short-sightedness sowed the seeds of militarised and destabilised Subcontinent in the first few months after independence.

Pakistan signed Mutual Defence Assistance Agreement with USA on 19 May 1954. It was aimed at strengthening of Pakistani armed forces.[2] The US military aid started arriving in November 1954. Under this programme, Pakistan Army was to be built up to one armoured division, four infantry divisions, one armoured brigade group and support elements for two Corps.[3]

After completion of rapid expansion of the Pakistan Army, from 1955 to 1958, consolidation and training phase started from 1959 till 1965.

RANN OF KUTCH

At the time of independence, Rann of Kutch had remained undemarcated. India claimed whole of Rann while Pakistan claimed only its northern portion. A series of talks between the two countries from 1956 till end 1964 remained inconclusive.

In January 65, India began creeping forward to occupy whole of Rann. To counter Indian moves, GOC 8 (Pakistani) Division Maj Gen Tikka Khan ordered the Indus Rangers to occupy Kanjarkot fort. They did it on 22 February.[4] Thereafter, India reinforced Chhad Bet and established new posts at Suigam, Bela, Vigiokot, Karim Shahi and Sardar post. It was followed by moving 31 Infantry (Indian) Brigade to Bhuj. Indian induction of regular troops in this sector was countered by Pakistan by ordering 8 Division to assume operational control of the Rann. On 6 March, 8 Division ordered 51 Infantry Brigade to move to its operational area. HQ 51 Brigade moved to Badin, 18 Punjab to Diplo, Battery of 14 Field Regiment to Kadhan, a company of 8 FF and a troop of 120 mm mortars to the Rahim ki Bazar. On 11 March, 6 Baluch was ordered to reconnoitre the routes to Khokhrapar and Umarkot.

On 5 April, the Indians established Ding Post, northwest of Ding. On night 6-7 April, 51 Brigade was ordered to destroy the enemy in area Sardar Post by last light 9 April.[5] It was planned to launch an attack on 8-9 April, with H hour at 1 am. The attack was planned in two phases. In phase one, 18 Punjab less one company and 8 FF were tasked to capture camp A and B respectively at Sardar Post. In phase two, 6 Baluch was to capture Jungle and Shalimar Posts. 14 Field Regiment and 83 Independent Mortar Battery were to provide the fire support. The attack began at 2 am. While attacking camp A, enemy fire from camp B, brought the attack of 18 Punjab to a halt. At about 4:30 am, 6 Baluch reported that they had captured Shalimar Post. Despite best efforts, 18 Punjab could not capture their objective and at 10:30 am the battalion was ordered by their Commanding Officer to dig in and hold their positions. 8 FF's attack on camp B also ground to a halt

due to enemy artillery and mortar fire.[6] Brig Azhar, the Brigade Commander of 51 Brigade, decided to use 6 Baluch with 2 companies of 8 FF to capture camp C. The battalion regrouped at Ding for the attack at 8:30 am. Enemy machine gun and mortar fire brought the attack to a halt. "Enemy positions were subjected to artillery fire intermittently till 7:30 pm.[7] "The whole brigade was now stretched around Sardar Post, with little prospects of capturing it. Brig Azhar decided to call off the operation and withdraw to a more defensible position. "At 6 pm a smoke screen was fired to extricate B Company 18 Punjab from the vicinity of Sardar Post.[8] Indians did not know about Pakistan's decision to withdraw and they also withdrew from Sardar Post. An Indian air OP discovered that the Post was not occupied.

Indian 50 Para Brigade with two battalions was moved to Rann on 9 April. On 18 April Maj Gen P O Dunn took over the command of the area. With the arrival of 50 Para Brigade at Bhuj on 18 April, India now had two regular brigades in the area.[9] After withdrawal, 51 Brigade established a compact defensive position in area Mara, Ding and Kanjarkot. On 10 April, 6 Punjab with a battery of 25 Field Regiment and a troop of 88 Mortar Battery arrived from Quetta. On 12 April, tactical HQ of 8 Pakistani Division was established at Hyderabad. The same day 12 Cavalry with one squadron of tanks reached Kadhan.

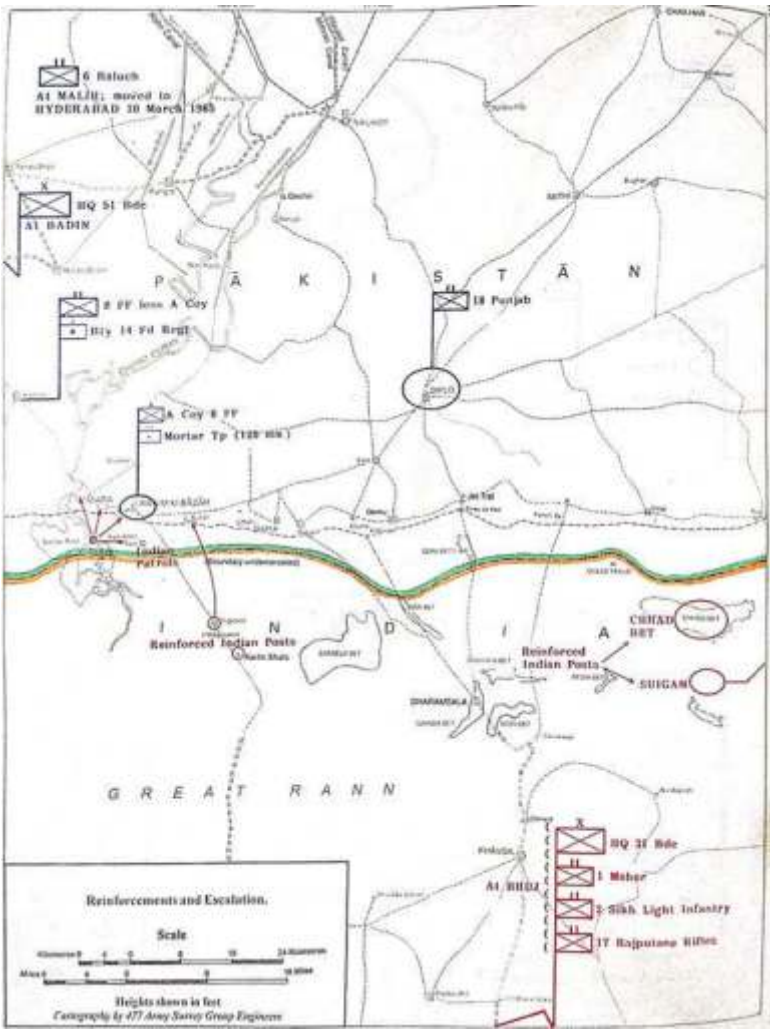
On 14 April, 6 Brigade with 15 Punjab and 25 Field Regiment reached south of Diplo. On 15 and 20 April, one squadron of 24 Cavalry and a battery of 12 Medium Regiment also reached Rann.

Maj Gen Dunn moved 3 Para battalion less 2 companies to Dharamshala and 2 Para battalion to Dharamshala-Biar Bet track. On, 18 April, Gen Tikka ordered 6 Brigade to dominate the area south of Wingor-Jat Trai and be ready to launch attack towards Vigiokot if Indians attacked 51 Brigade. Pakistani artillery by now was having a telling effect on the Indians.[10] On 20 April, Indian border police abandoned the post at point 84 and Biar Bet after a heavy dose of artillery fire. 3 Para battalion reoccupied both the

posts with a company each.

On instructions from GHQ, Gen Tikka ordered 6 Brigade to clear Sera Bet and Biar Bet as Sera Bet was well within Pakistani side of the border. Brig Iftikhar, the commander of 6 Brigade, planned to capture the objectives in two phases. In Phase one, 6 Punjab was to capture Sera Bet while 15 Punjab less two companies was to launch a feint attack on Chhad Bet on 24 April. In Phase two, 2 FF was to capture Biar Bet by first light 26 April. Squadron 24 Cavalry, Coy ex 15 FF (R&S) and two companies of 15 Punjab were to support attack in both the phases. 6 Punjab planned a silent attack with artillery fire on call and H hour at 2.30 am 24 April. 6 Punjab marched off at 8 pm. At about 3:30 am Lt Nadir Pervez was sent with a reconnaissance patrol to locate exact enemy positions. When they were 200 meters from the enemy they were fired upon. They quickly returned to their battalion. The Indian artillery started shelling 6 Punjab. In the meantime, a platoon of 15 Punjab under Captain Zafar Mehdi launched a feint attack on Chhad Bet.

Supported by a field battery, Mehdi kept Chhad Bet under a simulated attack for an hour. It deceived the Indian artillery and made it to shift some fire from Sera Bet to engage the feint attack. By daybreak artillery on both the sides was fully active, but 6 Punjab had not yet captured their objective. Commanding Officer 6 Punjab, ordered Maj Shakur Jan the company commander of B company 15 FF (R&S) to outflank the enemy and threaten it from a flank and rear. The manoeuvre bore fruit and Indians quickly withdrew leaving Sera Bet in Pakistani hands by 7:30 am.[11] In phase two, move of 2 FF along with 10 tanks of 24 Cavalry, two companies of 15 Punjab and a company of 15 FF started at 4 am on 26 April. The attacking troops were fired at when they were about 2000 meters from the enemy position. Realising that further delay could endanger the troops, 6 Brigade Commander ordered the armour squadron commander to launch an immediate assault with tanks without waiting for the infantry.



Map 8.

Source: Lt Gen Mahmud Ahmed, History of Indo-Pak War -1965, Karachi: Services Book Club, 2006.

Supported by artillery and fire of B Company of 15 FF, Maj Sher Altaf the squadron commander dashed towards the objective being defended by Indian C Company of 3 Para Battalion. The shock of sudden assault of tanks was too much for the Indians who withdrew in great haste.[12] Capture of Biar Bet marked the end of 8 Division's operations in the Rann of Kutch. Ground positions remained unchanged after 26 April 1965, though artillery duels continued for another month and a half. The hostilities ceased on 1 July with the signing of the Kutch agreement on 30 June 65.[13]

BACKGROUND OF 1965 WAR

After the 47-48 Kashmir War, though Nehru kept repeating the assurances given by Mountbatten in October 1947 that future of Kashmir would be decided as per the wishes of the Kashmiri people through plebiscite, but a slow process to integrate Kashmir into India had been initiated. This process of integrating Kashmir into India began in August 1953 with the removal of Sheikh Abdullah and his replacement by the ever-cooperative Bakshi Ghulam Muhammad.[14] In February 1954, an obliged Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad, eager to ingratiate himself with the Indian government got Maharajah Hari Singh's accession to India ratified from Kashmir Constituent Assembly.[15] A state (Jammu and Kashmir) constitution was drafted and adopted on November 19, 1956. Under its provisions, Kashmir became a part of India on January 26, 1957. The act was made irrevocable by the same assembly.[16] In January 1960, the Indian Supreme Court's assumption of jurisdiction over the state of Jammu and Kashmir further set the stage for amalgamation of IOK.[17] On 27 December 1963, the holy relic at Hazaratbal was reportedly stolen. It led to widespread and violent agitations in whole of Jammu and Kashmir. Those Pakistani's closely watching Kashmir, concluded from this agitation that people of Kashmir were averse to becoming part of India and also that under suitable conditions the people would rise against the Indian government. The agitation continued till Sheikh Abdullah was released from prison in April 1964 after 11 years of confinement. On 21 December 1964, India

enforced Articles 356 and 357 of its Constitution on the state of Kashmir. Article 356 empowered the Indian Head of the State to dismiss the Kashmir state government. By end 1964, Government of Pakistan was convinced that India no more considered Kashmir as an issue to be resolved with Pakistan. Therefore, a Kashmir Cell, headed by the Foreign Secretary Mr Aziz Ahmed was formed in 1964.[18] Kashmir Cell by end 1964 concluded that insurgency by Kashmiris was the only option to defreeze Kashmir issue. Main reasons were, first, Indian integration of IOK into Indian Union and refusal to resolve the issue. Second, Indian defeat in 1962 War against China had convinced Pakistan that Indian Army was still not ready for an all-out war. Third, it was felt in Pakistan that Indian five years rearmament programme, started after 1962's debacle, would tilt the balance of power in India's favour by 1967-68 thus closing the narrow window of opportunity to challenge Indian policy in Kashmir.

Insurgency in Indian Occupied Kashmir started in early August 1965. Insurgency was materially and morally supported by Pakistan as Kashmir was a disputed territory, yet to be decided as per UN resolutions. Indian army immediately started counter insurgency operations and two additional infantry battalions i.e., 4 Sikh and 2/9 Gorkha were ordered into Kashmir Valley. After initial panic of a few days, the Indian army started getting upper hand against the insurgents except those operating in area Budil-Rajauri. "On 13 August, Lt Gen Harbaksh Singh, Commander Indian Western Command ordered, GOC 19 Division to be prepared to capture Hajipir pass and Jura bulge at a short notice.[19] Small arms and field artillery fire by India started on daily basis across the cease fire line.

On night 14-15 August, Indians captured three Pakistani posts in Kargil sector.[20] In Chhamb sector, Indian 14 Field Regiment was causing a lot of nuisance by firing on civilians in villages Chanir and Koil. On the request of Maj Gen Akhtar, a few units of 4 Corps Artillery were moved forward to silence Indian guns. 4

Corps Artillery started the counter bombardment at 7:45 am on 15 August. Six guns of Indian 14 Field Regiment were rendered out of action. Brig B E Masters, Commander 191 Infantry Brigade, holding his orders group in the vicinity of 14 Field Regiment was killed along with other officers. Two companies of 15 Kumaon concentrated in the area suffered six casualties. After counter bombardment, 4 Corps Artillery shifted fire against enemy field fortifications and defence works. The fire continued up to 7 pm.[21]

INDIAN AGGRESSION IN KASHMIR

On 17 August, the Indian Army Chief during his visit to Jammu directed that plans for capture of Hajipir Pass and Jura bulge be finalised. He also discussed offensive against Lahore and Sialkot.[22] By 18 August Indian army felt a perceptible decrease in the tempo of insurgency and formal orders for offensive against Hajipir Pass from Uri and Poonch, against Jura Bulge and Pir Sahaba in Neelum valley were issued. These offensives were to start by 25 August. It has to be understood that by supporting insurgency, Pakistan in no way had infringed on UN resolutions. Cease fire line (CFL) was intact and conventional war had not been initiated. Indian conventional attacks across CFL were a clear and avoidable escalation. Indian army by attacking across CFL had not only violated CFL but had started another conventional war in the Subcontinent. Indians learned their lesson of avoidable escalation in 1965, and in late 1980's, 90's and 2015 onwards, tried to suppress the Kashmiri freedom struggle instead of cross CFL conventional attacks. By now i.e., 2018, Indians have realised that by attacking Pakistan they cannot pacify the indigenous Kashmiri freedom movement.

BATTLES OF JURA BULGE

The task of capturing Jura Bulge was entrusted to 104 Indian Brigade. The offensive started on night 23-24 August with the capture of Kontal Post in Lipa valley. The next night i.e., 24-25 August, 1 Sikh less two companies surprised Pakistani defenders on point 7802 along ridge Richhmari Gali- Pir Sahaba and

captured it. The next night they advanced further and captured Pir Sahaba feature as well. On 26 August, nothing stood between the enemy and Muzaffarabad except the battalion headquarters of 16 AK and six 25 pounder guns of 101 Composite Battery at Nauseri. On 26 August, the six guns of 101 Composite Battery kept the enemy at bay at Pir Sahaba. By evening, a company of 5 Punjab released by HQ 12 Division reached Nauseri. Second company of 5 Punjab reached on 27 August. On 29 August, the Battalion HQ along with third company of 5 Punjab also reached the area. The same day, Brig Khilji the commander of No 1 Sector was told to hand over command of his Sector to Brig Niazi and infiltrate across cease fire line in general area Tangdhar-Tithwal with 2 AK, 23 AK and three groups of SSG with a view to force enemy to withdraw from Pir Sahaba area. On 30 or 31 August, Brig Khilji shifted his tactical headquarters to Surjoi inside Jura Bulge. 2 AK reached Surjoi on 31 August. They were ordered to infiltrate on night 2-3 September.[23] 2 AK got late and on 3-4 September 3/8 Gorkha rifles supported by field, mountain and light artillery attacked and captured Surjoi. 2 AK counter attacked the Gorkhas at 3 pm on 4 September without artillery support. Due to massive Indian artillery fire, 2 AK withdrew, leaving Surjoi in enemy hands. On 5 or 6 September, the bridge on river Neelum near Mirpur, was demolished to prevent it from falling into enemy hands. On 8 September, Brig Niazi moved out to take over 14 Para Brigade at Pasrur and Brig Khilji once again took over the command of No 1 Sector. On 10-11 September, 3/8 Gorkhas captured the heights overlooking River Neelum.[24] 4 Kumaon attacked point 9013 on night 21-22 September and captured it. After the ceasefire on 23 September, Indians continued their attempts to reduce Jura Bulge. Starting on night 5 October, Indians captured point 10323 and 9020 by 7 October. Moving further west, a place overlooking Jura Bridge called ring contour was captured on 8 October and a height south of ring contour called, RUSTAM was captured on 10 October. A counter attack by 23 AK on 11 October was beaten back. On 15 October, Indians managed

to destroy Jura Bridge with a 106 mm recoilless rifle.

BATTLES OF BEDORI BULGE

In the Bedori Bulge, the Uri-Hajipir approach was being defended by 6 AK, deployed from Pir Kanthi to Khoja Bandi. The Poonch - Hajipir approach was being guarded by 4 AK from Qabranwali to Battal. Approaches to Hajipir Pass had no artillery support.

Indians attacked Hajipir Pass on night 25-26 August employing 68 Infantry Brigade (5 infantry battalions). The attack was supported by one field regiment, one field battery, one mountain battery, a medium troop and a section of 4.2-inch mortars.[25]1 Para Battalion started their attack along Sank-Sar-Ledwali Gali approach at 2230 hours on 25 August. By 6 pm 27 August, area up to and including Ledwali had been lost to 1 Para. The Paras continued their attack and captured Hajipir Pass by 11 am 28 August. On Bedori approach, attack by three infantry battalions initially failed. However, another attack from a different direction managed to capture Bedori by 28 August. Alarmed by Indian gains, 12 Division rushed 20 Punjab from Hajira to Hajipir Pass. They reached Galiwala sank on the evening of 28 August and took up defence at Khoranakka - Gitlan by 6 am on 29 August. 20 Punjab had artillery support of one section of 3.7" howitzers, a section of 25 pounders and a medium battery. 20 Punjab defeated all Indian attacks from 29 August till ceasefire on 23 September thus proving the worth of a regular infantry battalion properly supported by artillery. Indian attempt to capture Bisali feature on night 4-5 September also failed because of tenacious defence by 6 AK and fire support by two sections of 104 Composite Battery.

From the Poonch direction, 3 Rajputana rifles ex 93 Brigade launched attack on 25 August on Chand Tekri. They only managed to secure a foot hold in forward defences by 30 August. Chand Tekri was being defended by a company of 4 AK and supported by a section of 3.7" howitzers and a single 25 pounder gun deployed at Chirikot. The main defences were attacked by 3 Dogra

on night 1-2 September. This attack met with failure.[26] Thereafter, 93 Indian Brigade assembled two regular battalions (2 Sikh and 3 Dogra) and an adhoc Meghdoot Force to renew their attack on Chand Tekri. In view of this massive build-up, No. 2 Sector commander, pulled out the 3.7" howitzers section from Chand Tekri to prevent guns falling in enemy hands and redeployed them at Palangi. However, this redeployment seriously weakened Chand Tekri by denying artillery support. Indians attacked this position at 4:30 am on 6 September with almost 3 battalions and managed to capture the weakened positions of Chand Tekri and point 7702. After the capture of Hajipir Pass by 68 Brigade and Chand Tekri by 93 Brigade, Indians renewed their attacks to open the old Uri-Poonch road. To open this road, they had to capture Shahbaz Khan ridge and Gitlan - Ghoremar ridge on the two sides of this road.[27] While Gitlan-Ghoremar ridge was being defended on its northern edge by 20 Punjab, Shahbaz Khan ridge was being defended by two companies of 10 AK and one company of 8 Baloch but without any artillery support. Indians attacked Shahbaz Khan ridge from the north with two battalions (6 Dogra and 19 Punjab) on 9 September. The same day, two battalion's ex 93 Brigade (2 Sikh and 3 Dogra) were tasked to mop up and exploit up to Degwar Tirwan and Chhanjal Bridge.[28] The two pincers managed to link up at 9:30 am on 10 September.[29] On withdrawal from Shahbaz Khan ridge, 10 AK took up defensive positions south of 20 Punjab from Gitlan to Chaprian. This position was supported by artillery fire. Thereafter, till ceasefire on 23 September, Indians despite repeated attacks failed to dislodge 20 Punjab and 10 AK from this ridge and failed to open Uri-Poonch road. Indians attacked Chirikot on 21 September but failed due to effective defence by a company of 4 AK supported by a section of 3.7" howitzers and one 25 pounder gun.

In the battles for Jura and Bedori Bulge, one thing clearly emerged that where ever the manoeuvre was effectively supported by fire i.e., artillery, its chances of success enhanced many folds.

OPERATION GRAND SLAM

Indian aggression and physical capture of Bedori and Jura Bulges forced Pakistan to employ Pakistan Army across cease fire line in a riposte. Indians had violated the cease fire line and started conventional war, thereby forcing Pakistan to react the same way. However, Pakistan still acted prudently and instead of escalating the war across international borders restricted its riposte in disputed territory of Kashmir. Presidential order authorising military action in IOK was issued on 29 August.[30] Having advance knowledge of the Presidential order, Gen Akhter, the GOC of 12 Division, delivered his orders at 0200 hours on 29 August at Kharian to his brigade commanders. The D-Day for the operation was fixed as 1 September 1965. Forces allocated for this operation were 4 Corps Artillery, three infantry brigades, (102 ex 12 Division, 10 and 25 brigades ex 7 Division) one infantry battalion, (19 AK ex 12 Division) and two armoured regiments, (11 Cavalry and 13 Lancers ex 6 Armoured Division).[31] The offensive was planned in three phases. In phase one, 102 Brigade supported by 11 Cavalry and 19 AK supported by a tank squadron were tasked to capture area up to River Tawi including Laleali, Dewa and Chhamb. Phase two was to start at midday 1 September. In this phase, 10 Brigade and 13 Lancers were to cross river Tawi and capture Akhnur including bridge on River Chenab. In phase three, 102 Brigade was to operate on axis Akhnur- Naushahra- Jhangar and link up with 25 Brigade and thereafter capture Rajauri.[32]

To provide fire support to the operation, there were ten field, seven medium and two heavy batteries totalling 110 pieces belonging to Artillery 7, Artillery 15 Division, Artillery 4 Corps and the organic artillery of 12 Division.[33]

On the Indian side, 191 Infantry Brigade was defending the Chhamb sector. It had four regular battalions, two irregular battalions, C squadron 20 Lancers (AMX-13 tanks), 14 Field Regiment (25 pounders, deployed at Sakrana) and a troop of 39 Medium Regiment (5.5-inch guns, deployed at Mandiala).

Brigade HQ and 15 Kumaon were also located at Mandiala.[34]

102 Infantry Brigade, responsible to launch phase one of Operation Grand Slam, consisted of 9 Punjab, 13 Punjab and 8 Baloch. Brig Zafar Ali, the brigade commander planned his attack in three phases. In phase one, commencing operation at 5 am, 1 September, to capture area up to line Phagla-Khairowal-Chak Nawan-Chak Pandit by 9 am. In phase two capture Chhamb-Sakrana by 12 pm hours, while the third phase was exploitation up to Palanwala. Brigade phase one was to be led by 11 Cavalry. Regiment less C squadron was to advance between Moel and Paur to secure line Phagla- Khairowal, C squadron was to advance between Paur and Dalla and secure Chak Nawan - Chak Pandit. 9 and 13 Punjab were to follow the northern and southern cavalry prongs respectively. In phase two, 9 Punjab was tasked to clear Sakrana and Chhamb and 13 Punjab was tasked to clear Chak Nawan-Chak Pandit.[35]

The operation commenced at 3:30 am with preparatory fire of 110 pieces of artillery under Brig Amjad Chaudhry, Commander Artillery 4 Corps. Lt Col Abdul Aziz was commanding officer of 11 Cavalry. B Squadron leading the northern prong was commanded by Maj Raja Mohammad Iqbal. Alpha squadron was kept as reserve under Maj Inayat Ullah Asghar. C squadron leading the southern prong was under Maj Raza Shah. 11 Cavalry crossed the cease fire line (CFL) at 5:30 am. Dazed by 90 minutes artillery fire, the Indians in the forward defences hardly put up any resistance. B squadron was in contact with Mandiala defences where HQ 191 Brigade and 15 Kamaon were located and with the northern portion of Chhamb by 12 pm. 9 Punjab got late to launch brigade phase two as their commanding officer had been injured and now the battalion was being commanded by the second in command. C squadron reached their phase line in time though some of their tanks got bogged down, some were lost to enemy fire and the brave squadron commander Maj Raza Shah lost his life. 13 Punjab cleared Chak Nawan and Chak Pandit by 12 pm.

102 Infantry Brigade had kept 8 Baloch as its reserve. However, when Indian positions at Burejal, even when bypassed by 13 Punjab, did not fall, 8 Baloch was tasked to clear it with one company.

The attack stalled by 0:30 am. Second company of 8 Baloch supported by Alpha squadron 13 Lancers resumed attack and cleared Burejal by 11 am. 8 Baloch resumed their advance and captured Jhanda and Munawwar.

North of 102 Brigade, Number 4 Sector had been tasked to capture Laleali post and Dewa.[36] Number 4 Sector tasked 19 AK to capture Dewa. Dewa had been reduced to rubble by intense preparatory fire by artillery. 3 Mahar was defending Dewa area.[37] Artillery support was not available to 3 Mahar as Indian artillery in Mandiala had been knocked out by Pakistan artillery.[38] 19 AK captured Dewa by 10:45 am.

9 Punjab was getting late in capturing Sakrana and Chhamb, therefore Commander 102 brigade ordered 13 Punjab to move north and clear Chhamb. En-route, they were attacked by IAF aircraft and dispersed. By evening, Indian resistance north of Chhamb began to weaken. 9 Punjab captured Sakrana by 5 pm. Indians however held on to Chhamb. At 3 am Brig Zafar ordered 8 Baloch to move north and clear Chhamb by first light 2 September. "Unknown to Pakistan army, Indian 191 Infantry brigade had been ordered to withdraw to Akhnur at 8:50 pm on 1 September. 41 Indian Mountain brigade having two infantry battalions and 20 Lancers less two squadrons was ordered to occupy intermediate position at Troti-Jaurian.[39] By 3 am 2 September, 191 Indian infantry Brigade had withdrawn east of Tawi.[40] 9 Punjab captured Chhamb, Mandiala and Matrial by 6 am 2 September. "Full extent of victory dawned with sunrise on 2 September. Fifteen AMX tanks, fifty-nine assorted vehicles, twelve anti-tank weapons and thirteen 25 pounder guns lay stranded with the towing vehicles destroyed by Pakistan artillery shelling.[41]



Map 9.

Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

Phase one of Operation Grand Slam was a complete success. Phase two was to be launched by mid-day 2 September by 10 Brigade and 13 Lancers. At this critical juncture, one of the most fateful and controversial events of the war took place. Maj Gen Akhtar was replaced with Maj Gen Yahya, the GOC of 7 Division. At 1 pm, 2 September, 7 Division assumed command of Operation Grand Slam.[42] At the same time, Artillery 7 Division assumed command of all artillery units except 28 Medium Regiment. Artillery 4 Corps continued to coordinate fire support.[43] Due to change of command, 2 September was lost in giving new orders. However, this critical time was well spent by Indian 41 Mountain Brigade to strengthen the intermediate position of Jaurian.

As per orders of HQ 7 Division, at 5:30 pm, 2 September, 6 FF and 14 Punjab crossed Tawi with a squadron each of 13 Lancers and headed for Palanwala and Gigrial, the two limits of the bridgehead. The bridgehead was established by 7:10 pm, 2 September. At 8 am, 3 September, Gen Yahya gave orders to 10 Brigade to advance with two battalions up and secure Jaurian by

last light 3 September. 13 Lancers and 6 FF were to secure line Sahabanwali Khad. 14 Punjab was tasked to clear Nawa Hamirpur and also support 13 Lancers in capturing Jaurian. H hour was 12:30 pm.[44] By the morning of 3rd September, 41 (Indian) Mountain Brigade reported that intermediate position at Jaurian was reasonably well prepared. Indian 161 Field regiment and a battery of 38 Medium Regiment provided it with artillery support.[45]

13 Lancers commenced advance at 1 pm with C squadron leading. One Indian infantry company and a troop of tanks contested the advance of 13 Lancers and slowed the advance considerably. A battery of 161 (Indian) Field Regiment moved to a temporary position to support their delaying troops. 161 Field Regiment and 44 Medium battery ex 38 Medium Regiment were picked up by an Air OP of Pakistan artillery. Immediate counter bombardment by all Pakistani artillery in range was brought on these two units. Two guns of 161 Field Regiment received direct hits and ammunition started exploding. The mounting casualties, exploding ammunition and burning vehicles took its toll. The Indian soldiers abandoned their guns and ran away. It drastically reduced the fire available to the Indian force and weakened the delaying capability of the 41 Brigade.[46] Pakistan army recovered eighteen guns and subsequently raised 40 Field Regiment with them.[47]

Meanwhile on the southern axis, 14 Punjab captured Nawa Hamirpur by 4:30 pm. C squadron 13 Lancers contacted Troti at 5:30 pm and met with antitank fire. Thereafter A and B squadrons along with 6 FF undertook an outflanking movement from the north of Troti. Around this time Indian army decided to induct 28 Infantry Brigade to occupy a delaying position along Fatwal Ridge, six miles west of Akhnur. Position was to be occupied by first light 4 September.

Troti was attacked by two squadrons of 13 Lancers and 6 FF, from the north at 11:30 am, 4 September. After suffering

casualties, the attack was called off around 1330 hours. The same day, 14 Punjab captured Bakor at 1 pm and Danda by 3 pm am.[48] Midday 4 September, Gen Yahya issued fresh orders. 6 Brigade took over defences from 102 Brigade. 102 Brigade was ordered to advance north of 10 Brigade. Inter brigade boundary was Dhangar-Pahuan da Chak - Fatwal. Line Garh- Fatwal was to be cleared by first light 5 September. Meanwhile seeing the strength of Pakistani offensive, Indian army had ordered 41 Brigade to withdraw on night 4-5 September to area Akhnur. Jaurian fell at 9 am 5 September. 13 Punjab was ordered at 5 pm, 5 September to head for Devipur. They contacted Indian armour near Chak Karpal at 4 pm. 6 FF linked up with 13 Punjab at 10:30 pm, 5 September. In the north, 102 Brigade commenced advance at 4:30 pm, 4 September. By the evening of 5 September, the brigade had established itself on the western bank of Thindewali Khad.

10 Brigade's efforts to advance from Chak Karpal were not successful due to strong enemy resistance along Fatwal ridge. On night 5-6 September, 9 FF made several attempts but could not advance towards Fatwal. 102 Brigade resumed advance at 10:30 pm on night 5-6 September and reached western bank of Mawawali Khad by the evening of 6 September. HQ

In the morning of 6 September, news of Indian attacks across the borders against Sialkot and Lahore reached HQ 7 Division. It was followed by orders from GHQ for 11 Cavalry and Artillery 4 Corps to pull out and move to Sialkot. On 7 September, 10 Brigade was also moved to Sialkot. 6 Brigade relieved 10 Brigade on night 7-8 September. The western bank of Mawawali Khad was the farthest extent reached by 7 Division.[49]

"On receipt of wireless intercepts about pulling out of Pakistan troops from Akhnur sector, Indian army ordered 28 and 191 brigades to launch counter offensive on night 6-7 September to regain the lost area. The attack failed due to intense artillery and tank fire. After regrouping, another attack by 28 Brigade was planned on night 9-10 September. 2 Grenadiers, leading the attack

on Chak Karpal met with failure. Under the heavy impact of intense artillery and medium machine gun fire, the battalion disintegrated.[50] There after till ceasefire, the front stabilised in Akhnur sector except that Kalidhar ridge was captured by Pakistan but was later lost to Indians.

The problem with Operation Grand Slam was that though initially it achieved complete surprise, but the objective i.e., Akhnur was too obvious. The Indians packed the restricted approaches with two additional brigades tilting the relative strength in their favour. An offensive of such importance must always threaten multiple objectives keeping enemy on the horns of dilemma. Enemy responses thus get dispersed and weakened.

In this operation, Indians were defeated on two lines of defence's i.e., main defences along CFL and depth position at Troti-Jaurian.

THE LAHORE FRONT

Government of India took decision to cross international border and attack Pakistan on the evening of 1 September. This was yet another escalation by India. First India escalated the insurgency to across cease fire line conventional war in Kashmir. The second escalation was undeclared war across international borders. Pakistan on the other hand tried its best to avoid escalation. International comity of nations and UNO somehow failed to check Indian blatant aggression against its smaller neighbour. This emboldened India and later on it emerged as a dangerous bully in the region.

Indian Army Chief held his operational conference on 2 September and orders to Commands and Formations were issued on 3 September for attacking Pakistan on morning 6 September.[51] Indian 11 Corps was tasked to launch three simultaneous thrusts on axes Grand Trunk road, Bhikkiwind- Barki road and Khem Karan-Kasur road with a view to initially capture area up to BRBL canal and then capture bridges over it and establish bridge heads

across it. The Corps was also tasked to eliminate Pakistani enclave south of River Ravi in Dera Baba Nanak area. 11 Corps plan was to be executed by 4 Mountain Division on Kasur axis, 7 Division on Barki axis and 15 Division on GT road axis. 2 Armoured Brigade was kept as Corps reserve.[52] Indian 15 Division planned to advance along GT road with 54 infantry Brigade (Three infantry battalions and a squadron of tanks) and 1 Jat ex 38 Brigade with two troops of tanks to advance along axis Chugawan- Lapoke-Rani. 38 Brigade less 1 Jat was to follow 54 Brigade on GT road. 15 Dogra ex 54 Brigade was to lead the advance along GT road with 3 Jat of the same brigade moving on its north.[53] 5 Indian Artillery Brigade deployed after last light 5 September. Guns were deployed forward to support 15 Division operations up to BRBL Canal.

On the Pakistani side, 10 Division had been assigned the task of defending Lahore. Like rest of the Army, 10 Division had occupied and prepared its defences during Rann of Kutch conflict in April-May 65. However, on return to peace stations in July 65, these defences were dismantled. Only advantage of Rann of Kutch deployment was that everyone knew his task. Gen Sarfraz, the GOC 10 Division had put his formation on 8 to 12 hours' notice since 20 August due to situation in Kashmir. After, PAF - IAF aerial combat over Chhamb on 1 September, the notice was reduced to 4 to 8 hours and Division dispersed in their peace location. On 4 September, Gen Sarfraz gave orders to his division to move to their defences on night 5-6 September.[54] There was to be no move before midnight. "However, parties for preparing gun position were dispatched by 5 pm.[55] 10 Division planned to defend with two brigades in the main defences along BRBL Canal and one in the reserve. Protective detachments were to be deployed from the border to BRBL Canal.

114 Brigade the left forward brigade comprised 16 Punjab, 3 Baloch, 11 Baloch and A squadron 30 TDU. It was deployed from southern shoulder of North Siphon to RD 350 near village Dahuri.

23 Field Regiment was the direct support regiment. 103 Brigade comprising 12 Punjab, 17 Punjab, D Company 15 Baloch, B squadron 30 TDU and supported by 24 Field Regiment was deployed south of 114 Brigade to defend Barki axis. 22 Brigade, the divisional reserves consisted of 23 Cavalry, 15 Baloch less D company, and 18 Baloch and supported by 22 Field Regiment. B and D companies of 11 FF (R&S) were under 103 and 114 Brigades respectively as advance positions. General support artillery was evenly distributed between the two axes.

The two forward brigades and their direct support field regiments moved out at mid night 5-6 September. 22 Brigade and the remaining artillery units were to move on the night 6-7 September.

The leading elements of Indian 7 and 15 Infantry Divisions crossed the border at 3:30 am (4 am IST). The Indian attack took the Rangers manning Pakistani border posts completely by surprise.[56]

BATTLES ON AMRITSAR- LAHORE AXIS

By 3:30 am 6 September, only the leading companies of 114 Brigade's battalions had reached the main defensive positions along the BRBL Canal. On knowing about Indian attack, both the battalions occupied their defences quickly. The rehearsals carried out during the Rann of Kutch conflict had paid off.[57] Indian 54 Infantry Brigade's first phase went well. 15 Dogra captured bridge over UBDC north of Wagah village by first light. 3 Jat captured Dial village by 5 am. C Squadron 14 Horse linked up with 3 Jat by 7:30 am. On Chuganwan-Rani axis, 1 Jat supported by 2 troops of 14 Horse drove back Rangers from their post opposite Rani. B Coy 11 Baloch deployed in Bhani Dhilwal area was alerted by 1 Jat's advance. Immediately artillery fire was asked. 23 Field Regiment responded and forced the Indians (1 Jat) to halt in Icchogil Uttar. They tried to resume advance at 9 am but were again defeated by combined fire of artillery and Balochis. [58]

In 3 Baloch area, commando platoon of Indian 13 Punjab

reached near Railway Bridge over BRBL Canal by 6 am. The company commander asked for artillery fire. Artillery fire drove the enemy commando platoon back to the border.[59] At 7 am a sortie of PAF aircraft flew over the GT road and picked up the movement of 54 Indian Brigade.[60] It rocketed and machine gunned 3 Jats and 15 Dogra, inflicting considerable casualties. The air strike delayed Indian advance by two hours.

Gen Sarfraz on learning of Indian attack, ordered immediate move of 22 Brigade and the remaining artillery into their battle positions. HQ 22 Brigade, 23 Cavalry and 18 Baloch less its B Company were concentrated in Mahmud Buti area. 22 Field Regiment, the direct support unit of 22 Brigade, came into action near Tejgarh at about 9:50 am. 9 Medium and 30 Heavy Regiments came into action within a couple of hours after receipt of the deployment orders.

54 Indian Brigade resumed advance at 9 am with C squadron 14 Horse in the lead and 3 Jat following it. At this time PAF struck again targeting the vehicles and tanks comprising the fighting echelon of the brigade. The artillery observation party with 3 Jats was written off and there after the unit lost contact with their artillery. PAF then turned its attention to the gun area of a field regiment in direct support of the brigade and caused some casualties. The advance however continued. On approaching Dograi, C squadron 14 Horse halted at a distance of 400 yards east of the village. 3 Jat and a troop of tanks attacked the village from the north. Dograi was held by the left forward platoon of A company of 3 Baloch. 3 Jat captured Dograi around 11:30 am but was unable to get any closer to the canal on account of Pakistan artillery fire which kept them at bay.[61]

38 Infantry Brigade following 54 Brigade was struck at 11 am by PAF. At 1:30 pm PAF again attacked the convoy for 35 minutes causing more casualties. Indian 13 Punjab managed to reach 500 yards from BRBL Canal. They were bombed and machine gunned mercilessly by the defenders. There was no artillery observer with

them so the fire of the Indian divisional artillery remained unused. They were forced to fall back to Wagah railway station area.[62]



Map 10.
Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

On Pakistani side, 3 Baloch had no time to prepare their defences and fought from the open. Colonel Tajammal Hussain, CO 3 Baloch reached Batapur Bridge and found it crowded with refugees. Colonel Tajammal ordered two recoilless rifles to cover the bridge. While the artillery fire held the Indians in check, two tanks of 14 Horse approached the bridge. Both were quickly knocked out by the two recoilless rifles of 3 Baloch. To prevent the bridge falling intact into enemy hands, Engineers started preparing it for demolition. At 1030 hours, Commander 114 Brigade ordered the Engineers to fire the incomplete demolition. The premature explosion damaged the bridge partially, but rendered it unsafe for tanks to cross.[63] Meanwhile, 22 Brigade dispatched C squadron 23 Cavalry, A company 18 Baloch and A Company 11 FF (R &S) to reinforce the Batapur bridge area. They were placed under 114 Brigade and deployed in the area to further strengthen the defence. Meanwhile Engineers continued to prepare charges to demolish the bridge. The bridge was finally demolished at 00:45 am on 7 September. On the Indian side, "Commander 54 Brigade assuming that he could neither replenish nor reinforce 3 Jat at Dograi, decided to go on the defensive around Goal Dial.[64] 3 Jat vacated Dograi by 2:45 pm and reached Gosal Dial by 4:30 pm.[65] Due to setback on GT road axis, GOC 15 Division ordered 38 Infantry Brigade around 4 pm to capture bridge over BRBL Canal near Bhasin. The brigade arrived north of Sadhanwali at 3 am (7 September) and found the track broken and slushy. The brigade decided to take up defensive position.[66] 38 Brigade waited for dawn and food before resuming advance. 1/3 Gurkha was tasked to lead, commencing move at 5:30 am. As soon as they were within range, Pakistani artillery and machine guns opened up causing many casualties. Second battalion of 38 Brigade, 3 Garhwal rifles was also unable to make any headway. At 1:50 pm, the brigade commander, the brigade major, officers commanding the engineers and the artillery regiments found themselves in the open, under Pakistani medium artillery fire. Communications between brigade and HQ 15 Division had

broken down. GOC 15 Division set off at 3:30 pm 7 September, in search of his lost brigade. Unknowingly, he strayed into the area held by A Company 18 Baloch and discovered his mistake when Balochis opened up at close range. He had a narrow escape but his jeep along with his briefcase was captured by Pakistani troops. 54 Brigade Commander was injured on morning 7 September. His replacement took over at 10 am and planned to attack the Batapur and Jallo bridges with a battalion each on night 7-8 September. However, the attack failed due to intense Pakistan artillery fire. 54 Brigade fell back to Dial and Gosal where it took up defensive positions by first light 8 September.[67]

In the north on Chugawan- Rani Axis, 1 Jat after two futile attempts to capture bridge on BRBL Canal withdrew to their side of international border. HQ 11 Corps than detailed 6 Kumaon from 96 Infantry Brigade to capture the bridge on night 6-7 September. 6 Kumaon reached a thousand yards east of Bhani Dhilwal at 5 am on 7 September. On closing up to the canal, they discovered that the bridge had already been demolished. Success signal was anyway sent to Headquarters 15 Division. CO 6 Kumaon had asked 1 Jat to move forward to Icchogil Hitar on receipt of success signal and also send forward their reorganisation stores. But nothing came forward because of heavy shelling. At about 8 am the tanks moved forward but were unable to get closer than 1500 yards where the Kumaon regiment was stuck. Without any reorganisation stores and out of communications with the rear, 6 Kumaon withdrew to Rani at 2:30 pm, 7 September.[68]

Around 4 pm, D company, 16 Punjab was ordered to destroy Indian Tooti post, west of River Ravi, by a dawn attack on 7 September. D company led by Captain Safdar stormed the post only to find it abandoned.

At 1 pm, 7 September, GOC 10 Division, ordered 22 Brigade to launch a counter attack across BRBL Canal. 22 Brigade comprised 23 Cavalry, 18 Baloch less two companies and 15 FF (R&S) less three companies. 22 Field Regiment was in direct

support. Counter attack was launched on morning of 8 September. BRBL Canal was crossed from the southern shoulder of the North Syphon. A foot hold had to be secured at Bhaini Dhilwal for the reserves to deploy for attack. By sheer chance, 22 Brigade's counter attack coincided with combined attack of 6 Kumaon and 1 Jat. These two battalions arrived at 5:30 am opposite Bhaini Dhilwal, the area held by D company of 15 FF (R&S) and a company of 11 Baloch. Here the Indians were checked by concentrated fire of artillery and infantry. At dawn two troops of A Squadron 14 Horse moved up from Rani where both the Indian battalions had gone to ground. Indian tanks engaged the eastern bank of the Canal from a considerable distance.

A squadron 23 Cavalry after crossing the BRBL Canal moved south along the eastern bank. When they reached the eastern exit of the demolished bridge at Bhaini, they lost two tanks to fire from Indian 14 Horse operating on axis Rani-Bhaini.[69] Rest of the squadron and D Company 18 Baloch took up positions on the eastern side of BRBL Canal around Bhaini Dhilwal. By 11:30 am B squadron 23 Cavalry and C Company 18 Baloch also joined them. B squadron formed up for attack, facing south, and one thousand yards east of the canal. The squadron led the attack with two companies of 18 Baloch closely following it. The attacking troops did not meet any resistance till they reached north of village Lakhanke. On the Indian side, 38 Brigade was holding defensive positions in area Sadhanwali. 54 Brigade was in area Dial-Gosal and C squadron 14 Horse was deployed astride GT road near Dograi village. It was C squadron of Indian 14 Horse which contested the advance of B squadron of Pakistani 23 Cavalry. The firefight started around 4:30 pm and continued till around 6:15 pm.[70] At about 6:15 pm, C squadron 14 Horse withdrew towards Dial. B squadron 23 Cavalry moved forward and took up position astride the GT road in area Mile 13. Quickly two companies of 18 Baloch moved forward and took up defences astride GT road and on Eastern bank of the Canal. The success of 10 Division's counter attack was mainly due to surprise it achieved.

The same day i.e., 8 September, 10 Division had ordered 114 Brigade to clear area Rani- Shamsher post to provide protection to the base and flank of 22 Brigade's counter attack. B Company 16 Punjab and A squadron 30 TDU were tasked to capture Rani and then advance up to Chugawan drain. 15 Baloch was tasked to capture Shamsher post. Tanks of 30 TDU got bogged down. Therefore, B Company 16 Punjab alone captured Rani post. 9 Kumaon and 1 Jat withdrew towards Kakkar. A company 15 Baloch captured Shamsher post by 5 pm. B Company 16 Punjab was withdrawn to BRBL at night being too vulnerable at Rani post.[71] The same day, 4 Engineers battalion was ordered to construct a class 50 bailey bridge for logistic support to 22 Brigade east of BRBL Canal. The bridge was ready by 6 am 9 September.[72] On 9 September, Indians remained on the defensive, while 22 Brigade consolidated its gains, it was reinforced, and it also probed eastward on GT road. A squadron 23 Cavalry and C company 18 Baloch encountered enemy in area Mile 13.5. While infantry took up defensive position, armour came back to Dograi.[73] On 10 September, 22 Brigade resumed advance toward Wagah and 114 Brigade ordered 15 Baloch to probe toward Kakkar. A squadron 23 Cavalry and A company 16 Punjab started advance at 7:30 am and met defences of 54 Indian Brigade at Dial. After a few hours of heavy engagement in which both sides suffered many casualties, Pakistani troops withdrew to area Mile 13.5 by 12:45 pm.[74] On Rani Axis, A company of 15 Baloch and five tanks of 30 TDU set off towards Kakkar at 11 am on 10 September. 1 Jat and 6 Kumaon once again disintegrated and fell back to Lopoke. Pakistani troops advanced till village Manjh. This modest force of an infantry company and five tanks created panic in Indian army, which took it as a serious threat developing from the north against Amritsar and took major readjustment to counter it. 96 Infantry Brigade was released to 15 Division to counter this threat. 50 Para Brigade was placed along Hudiara Drain against threat along GT road. 41 Mountain Brigade, 1 Horse and 7 Cavalry were also moved to the sector for the defence of Amritsar against non-existent Pakistani threat. 2 Independent Armoured

Brigade was also moved to Amritsar from Khem Karan. It reached Amritsar at 5 am, 12 September and was ordered to move back to Khem Karan at 1 pm on 13 September. 41 Mountain Brigade replaced 50 Para Brigade at Hudiara Drain on 12 September. 50 Para Brigade was ordered to resume advance. On 11 September, 96 Brigade was ordered to clear area up to BRBL canal along Rani Axis. Starting advance on midday 11 September, 96 Brigade contacted BRBL defences on evening 13 September. This area had already been vacated by Pakistani troops.[75] There after till ceasefire nothing worth mentioning happened on this axis.

By 14 September, Indians had five infantry brigades (each of three battalions) and three tank regiments in Amritsar sector. Despite this strong force, Indian 15 Infantry Division managed to launch only two significant attacks against 10 Division in the remaining days of the war. In the first case 50 Para Brigade was tasked to capture area between Jallo Bridge and aqueduct of UBDC. After a lot of delay and reluctance, 50 Para Brigade put in the attack on 17 September with 2 Para battalion. The attack failed.[76] Another attack by 50 Para Brigade was launched the next night i.e., 18 September at 11:30 pm." The Indian assault fizzled out in the face of steadfast 3 Baloch and supporting artillery both of which kept the reluctant attackers well away from the Canal."[77] The second and the final attack by 15 Division was by 54 Infantry Brigade to capture Dograi salient. The Salient was being defended by 16 Punjab with A and B companies only, B Squadron 23 Cavalry (only 4 tanks), C Company of 8 Punjab, D company 12 Punjab and one company of 15 FF (R &S). Both the companies of 16 Punjab were deployed astride GT road in area Mile 13.5. C company 8 Punjab was defending village Dograi up to the area including GT road. B squadron 23 Cavalry was guarding the gap between village Dograi and the left forward company of 16 Punjab. D company 12 Punjab held position on the east bank of BRBL Canal. Since 14 September, Indians had kept the Dograi salient under steady fire of artillery and IAF. The strength of the defenders kept on reducing due to daily casualties. By 19 September, 16 Punjab fighting strength was

reduced to 90-100 men each in both its forward companies.[78] Knowing that cease fire was likely to be declared soon, Indian army was desperate to show some results in this sector. 54 Brigade supported by 14 Horse was tasked to capture the Dograi salient on night 21-22 September. 54 Brigade planned to launch 13 Punjab supported by 14 Horse astride GT road to capture area Mile 13 by 11:59 pm, 21 September. 3 Jat was tasked to capture Dograi from the north. Thereafter, 14 Horse was to join 3 Jat at Dograi, and was to be prepared to beat back any counter attack by Pakistan on 22 September. B Squadron 23 Cavalry at dusk of 21 September withdrew towards Bhasin salient. 16 Punjab did not know about this withdrawal. It left the northern flank of Dograi salient unguarded. The attack by 13 Punjab which was supported by massive artillery fire was beaten back by the two companies of 16 Punjab. During the battle, the wireless sets of the artillery observers with the forward companies were destroyed. 3 Jat, however moved undetected through the gap left by B squadron 23 Cavalry and captured Dograi by 3 am 22 September. In the morning of 22 September, 16 Punjab came to know about the loss of Dograi in their rear. The Commanding Officer of 16 Punjab sent his adjutant, Captain Nasir Janjua, to recapture Dograi position with the help of company of 8 Punjab deployed in the area. Captain Nasir could not contact the company as it had already left the position. In the morning, 13 Punjab and 15 Dogra supported by 14 Horse began their attack astride GT road. The two-battle worn and fatigued companies of 9 Punjab, cut off in the rear by 3 Jat had no chance against this massive Indian attack. They stood their ground and fought with tenacity. Except honour, everything was lost. By 8 am, 22 September, the battle was over for 16 Punjab. Fifty-six including two officers lost their lives, forty were wounded and seventy were taken prisoners. Among the prisoners were the Commanding Officer, Lt Col Golwalla and his direct support battery commander, Maj Tasleem Beg Chughtai. 10 Division counter attack launched at 1115 hours, the same day with 23 Cavalry less B squadron and 1 Baloch failed to recapture Dograi salient.

BATTLES ON KHALRA-BARKI AXIS

Khalra-Barki axis was being defended by 103 Brigade, Commanded by Brig Mohammad Asghar. 24 Field Regiment was in direct support to 103 Brigade. The main defence rested along BRBL Canal, while advance position was along Hudiara Drain. On the night of 4-5 September, the advance position troops comprising one company 12 Punjab, B Company 11 FF (R&S) and a battery of 24 Field Regiment occupied the advance position. D Company 17 Punjab commanded by Maj Shafqat Baloch relieved 12 Punjab's company at advance position at 8 pm on 5 September. The remaining units of 103 Brigade moved out at midnight 5-6 September and occupied their defences during early hours of 6 September. 17 Punjab was the left forward battalion while 12 Punjab reinforced with D Company of 15 Baloch was the right forward battalion.[79] D company of 17 Punjab was deployed on both banks of Hudiara Drain with B Company of 11 FF (R&S) guarding its two flanks.

On the Indian side, 7 Infantry Division Commanded by Maj Gen SK Sibal was tasked to advance on Barki axis, capture Barki bridge on BRBL Canal and establish a bridgehead across the Canal for further offensive. To accomplish this task, 7 Division had two brigades. 65 Brigade established a firm base short of border on night 5-6 September. By early morning 6 September, 48 Infantry Brigade led by 6/8 Gurkha Rifles, crossed the border. 48 Brigade conducted a text book 'advance to contact' operation and lost time.[80] When the point platoon was 300 yards short of Hudiara Drain it was fired upon by Pakistani advance position troops. 21 Central India Horse (CIH) was ordered forward. A and B squadrons advanced left and right of the road respectively. Around 8 am, the leading tank of A squadron was hit. This bought the other tanks to a grinding halt. Company Commander, D Company of 17 Punjab decided to demolish the bridge on Hudiara Drain. Around 10 am the half-prepared demolition was fired. It partially demolished the bridge but made it unusable for tanks. At 1 pm 3

Guards, A and C squadron of 21 Central India Horse, supported by complete Artillery 7 Division attacked Nurpur. The platoon of B Company 11 FF (R&S) and an observer from 24 Field Regiment deployed between Nurpur and Bhuchar Kahana distributary withdrew to Hudiara Drain Aqueduct area when the Indian attack commenced. At about 1:30 pm, Brig Asghar the Commander 103 Brigade ordered the advance position to withdraw. They fell back to BRBL Canal.[81]

The bridge on Hudiara Drain had been damaged; therefore 7 Infantry Division engineers were called forward to construct a bridge. The bridge was ready by 2:45 pm, 7 September. Appreciating that 48 Brigade had suffered heavy casualties at Hudiara Drain, GOC 7 Indian Division ordered 65 Infantry Brigade to lead the advance. 4 Sikh Light Infantry leading the advance of 65 Brigade took up positions astride the axis after crossing the Drain. 16 Punjab passed through 4 Sikh and reached Barka Kalan at about 11 pm and took up positions north of the road. Thereafter 9 Madras moved forward and occupied Barka Kalan. There was no further advance as "any movement forward of Barka Kalan drew heavy fire from Pakistan artillery.[82] On 8 September, instead of advancing towards BRBL, Indians felt contented to capture empty villages in the area. 16 Indian Punjab moved into Barka Khurd. 4 Sikh launched a set piece attack on unoccupied Brahmanabad village. During this operation Indian artillery, supporting the attack, fired air burst shells, causing 90 casualties to 4 Sikh.

There was no major Indian activity on 9 September. GOC 7 Division decided to attack Burki on 10 September. It thus gave five days to 103 Brigade to prepare its main defences. 103 Brigade's main defence was held by 12 and 17 Punjab which were deployed on both side of the BRBL Canal. Each battalion had two companies on the canal and two in the depth. The two forward companies of 17 Punjab had their two platoons on the eastern bank of the canal with the third platoon at Gobindpura and Barki respectively. 12 Punjab had almost similar deployment with their

forward companies having two platoons on the eastern bank and third platoon further east in line with Barki defences.[83] Maj Aziz Bhatti was the company commander of 17 Punjab's company defending Barki area. He was located with the platoon defending village Barki. Since 7 September, Indians had kept the Barki defences under almost constant artillery fire.

65 Indian Brigade tasked to capture Barki on 10 September, planned to accomplish its mission in two phases. Phase one started with heavy artillery fire at 7:30 pm. At 8 pm 4 Sikh battalion support by whole of Artillery 7 Divisional attacked Barki. While the battle was going on at Barki, 65 Brigade launched phase two with 16 Punjab supported by B squadron CIH. The attackers passed south of Barki village and despite many tank casualties managed to reach BRBL Canal just south of the bridge site at around 11:40 pm. Upon discovering that Indians had bypassed Barki from the south, A and B companies of 17 Punjab were ordered to fall back on home bank of BRBL Canal. Maj Aziz Bhatti waited till all his men had withdrawn. It was not before 1 am on 11 September that the Indians secured the eastern bank of the BRBL Canal. On morning 12 September, three Indian tanks started shooting Aziz Bhatti's position. He got up and indicated targets to artillery observer. Throughout the artillery shoot, Aziz Bhatti kept standing. Two of the Indian tanks were hit. However, the third tank killed Maj Aziz Bhatti. He was awarded Nishan-i-Haider, the highest military award for bravery in Pakistan Army.[84] After the fall of Barki, Brig Jamil Akhtar, the Commander Artillery 10 Division permitted the Commanding Officer of 24 Field regiment to use his discretion to reposition his unit rearward. Lt Col Sial decided not to move his unit back and let it remain at its position.[85] Thereafter till cease-fire, there was hardly any worthwhile activity on Barki axis.

KASUR FRONT

Kasur front was being defended by 11 Division from Bedian i.e., south of 10 Division till excluding Sulemanki. 11 Division

was raised on 28 May 1965, with Maj Gen Abdul Hamid Khan as its first GOC. Just three months after its raising, the still incomplete Division had to go to battle. HQ 1 Corps had assigned two tasks to 11 Division. First was the defence of its area of responsibility and the second was to secure general line joining Rajoke - crossing over the Kasur Branch Canal near Mile 29-Bahadurnagar (a village near Valtoha) to facilitate operations of Strike Force South. (1 Armoured Division and 7 Infantry Division). 11 Division comprised 21 Brigade (5FF and 13 Baloch), 52 Brigade (7 Punjab and 12 Baloch), 106 Brigade (1 East Bengal and 7 Baloch) and Artillery 11 Division (26 Field Regiment, 38 Field Regiment, 12 Medium Regiment less a battery, 35 Heavy Regiment reinforced by a battery of 30 Heavy Regiment and 37 Corps Locating Regiment less a battery). 106 Brigade was the left forward brigade deployed from Bedian to Nathuwala Siphon. 35 Heavy Regiment (two batteries of 8-inch howitzers) was in direct support of this brigade. 52 Brigade was the right forward brigade deployed from excluding Nathuwala Siphon to Hussainiwala enclave. 12 Medium Regiment less a battery and a battery of 38 Field Regiment were in direct support of this Brigade. 21 Brigade with 6 Lancers was the division reserve with 26 Field Regiment in direct support. 26 Field Regiment was deployed in Kasur area to support the two forward brigades.[86]

On 3rd September, Indian 4 Mountain Division commanded by Maj Gen Gurbaksh Singh received its operational orders. It was tasked to capture territory up to East bank of BRBL Canal from general area Bedian to Ganda Singhwala and be prepared to defeat Pakistani offensive of an Armoured Division and two infantry brigades on axis Kasur- Khem Karan.[87] 4 Mountain Division consisted of 7 and 62 Mountain Brigades. 4 Mountain Artillery Brigade had three artillery units.

Gen Gurbaksh Singh planned his operation in two phases. In phase one, 62 Mountain Brigade was to advance on axes Khem Karan-Kasur and Khem Karan-Ganda Singhwala and capture area

up to eastern bank of Rohi Nala, the area held by B company of 7 Punjab. In the second phase, 7 Mountain Brigade was to secure area up to BRBL Canal from Ballanwala to BRBL junction with UBDC near Bedian, the areas held by 7 Baloch and 1 EB respectively.[88] In second phase, 62 Mountain Brigade was to capture area up to east bank of BRBL Canal from south of Ballanwala to Ganda Singhwala i.e., the entire area of responsibility of 52 Brigade.[89] 4 Mountain Division commenced its operation at 5:30 am. 62 Mountain Brigade employed 9 J&K Rifles with under command A squadron 9 Horse on axis Khem Karan - Kasur, 13 Dogra on axis Khem Karan-Ganda Singhwala and 18 Rajputana rifles was deployed to defend railway line and Khem Karan - Rohiwal track. 9 J&K attacked with A company south and C company north of road Khem Karan- Kasur. C company 9 J&K had no artillery observer with them however A company had an artillery observer.

7 Punjab, the right forward battalion of 52 Infantry Brigade was defending axis Khem Karan-Kasur. It had three companies on BRBL Canal. Its B Company reinforced with R&S platoon ex 11 FF was deployed along Rohi Nala from the main road to 20r east of Ladheke.[90] At 5:15 am 6 September, Indian tanks and infantry (9 J&K along with A Squadron 9 Horse) were spotted forming up behind Khem Karan custom post ahead of number 4 platoon of B Company 7 Punjab. At 5:45 am Pakistan artillery engaged 9 J&K and A squadron 9 Horse with sixty medium shells.[91] The first Pakistani artillery salvo wrote off the artillery observer with A company 9 J&K and pinned down both the leading companies. CO 9 J&K now pushed forward B Company on his right flank but it also got pinned down by artillery fire. Despite efforts, CO 9 J&K could not replenish his three forward companies as area between the Rohi Nala and the battalion's supply echelons was exposed to artillery and the direct firing weapons of number 4 platoon of B company 7 Punjab. At about 8 am Company Commander B Company reported that his number 4 platoon was dangerously low in ammunition. D company deployed on BRBL Canal behind

number 4 platoon immediately provided some replenishment.

13 Dogra attacked astride track Khem Karan-Ganda Singhwala. It attacked with two companies up. The northern company hit number 6 platoon of B company 7 Punjab and was held up at Rohi Nala. Southern company passed south of B Company defences unnoticed and gained a foothold west of Rohi Nala. CO 13 Dogra pushed across his depth one or two companies and captured Rohiwal village and 40 r.[92] By around 0945 hours, CO 7 Punjab decided to recapture Rohiwal and 40 r and restore Rohi Nala line by launching a quick counter attack. A company deployed along BRBL Canal and defending Jhuggian Bridge was tasked to launch the counter attack. By, 10:30 am A company was ready to attack. To support the attack, Pakistan artillery fired air burst ammunition on Rohiwal and 40 r. Within minutes, 13 Dogra were in complete disarray as large chunks of shrapnel rained on them from the sky. 13 Dogra suffered sixty dead including two officers. Fifteen were taken prisoner including the second-in-command of the unit. Counter attack by A company 7 Punjab was successful and it was ordered to be deployed on Rohi Nala at erstwhile positions of number 6 platoon and composite platoon R&S.[93]

North of 62 Mountain Brigade, 7 Mountain Brigade was tasked to capture East bank of BRBL Canal from Bedian Headworks to Ballanwala. 7 Mountain Brigade consisted of 4 and 7 Grenadiers and was supported by C squadron of 9 Horse. Bulk of area of 7 Mountain Brigade objective was being defended by Pakistani 106 Brigade (1 East Bengal and 7 Baloch). Bedian Head Works was being defended by 1 EB and 7 Baloch was defending area from Pannuwan to inter-brigade boundary with 52 Brigade. 35 Heavy Regiment less a battery was in direct support of the brigade i.e., a heavy battery each was supporting 1 EB and 7 Baloch. Ballanwala was attacked by D company 7 Grenadiers at 5:45 am, but without artillery support as radio set with the FOO was not through with the guns. 500 yards short of the objective they were taken on by the battery of 35 Heavy. After loss of ten men and firing off all

their ammunition, CO 7 Grenadier pulled his company back. Pannuwan was attacked by 4 Grenadiers supported by C squadron 9 Horse. H hour was 7 am, 6 September. Five out of ten tanks of 9 Horse bogged down en route to FUP. Attack was delayed and finally launched at 9:30 am. By 11 am, 4 Grenadiers had closed up to the east bank of BRBL Canal. However, the tanks got bogged down well short of the objective. Later in the day, C squadron 9 Horse, with whatever tanks were available and supported by a company of 7 Grenadiers was ordered to capture Waigal. H hour was 5 pm. The attack fizzled out a couple of hundred yards from the objective because "heavy fire from Pakistan artillery prevented further progress."[94]

7 Grenadiers were once again tasked to capture Ballanwala with H hour as 9 pm. Whole of 4 Mountain Artillery Brigade provided fire support for the attack. The attack started well. However, while the troops were still a considerable distance short of the objective that artillery fire stopped. The troops immediately took up positions. After half an hour, CO 7 Grenadier was informed that no more artillery fire was available. He decided to continue the attack under fire support of his unit's integral weapons. The assaulting Indian troops were caught by Pakistan artillery (35 Heavy) and infantry weapons while wading through Rohi Nala. Having already suffered a defeat at Ballanwala in the morning, being devoid of own artillery support and caught in the open against heavy artillery fire, 7 Grenadiers disintegrated and began to withdraw. Command and control was lost. Troops got dispersed and reached Valtoha, 10,000 yards inside India, in small parties by the next morning.[95] Around midnight 6-7 September, 17 Rajput ex 7 Indian Division attacked Bedian Head works. The Head works was being defended by B Company 1 EB. A squadron less a troop, ex 15 Lancers, had reached Bedian Head works to reinforce it, at 3 pm on 6 September. The Squadron Commander decided to place his tanks east of the Head works where excellent fields of fire and suitable positions were available. The presence of tanks on eastern side of the Canal and their use at night

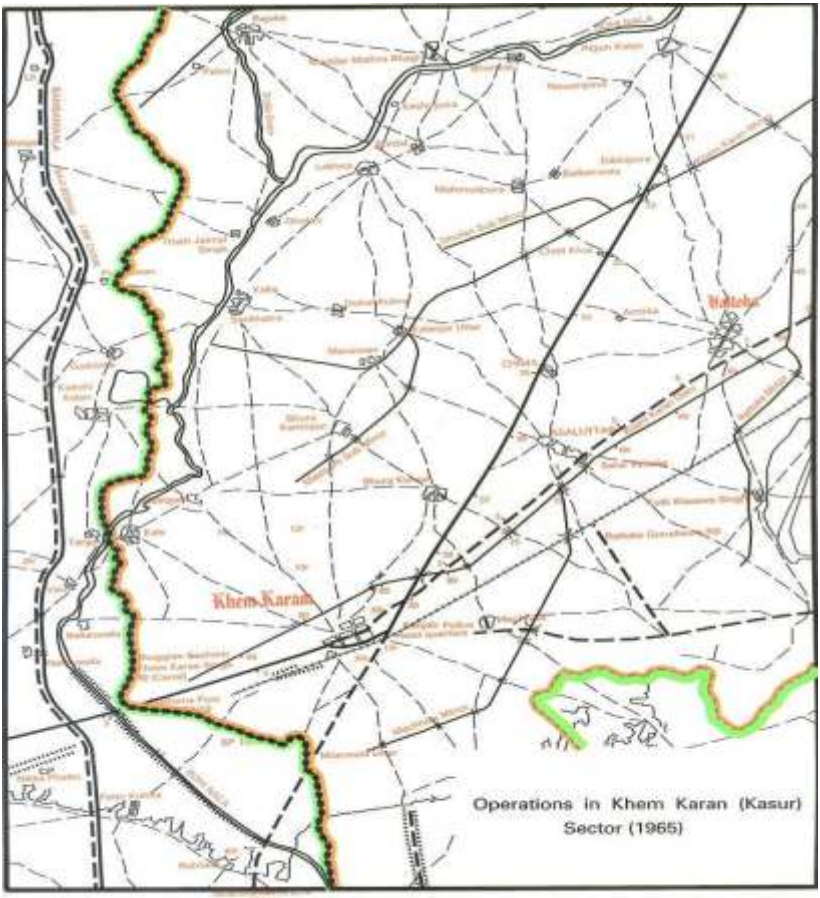
surprised the Indians.[96] Due to combined effect of fires of 1 EB A squadron 15 Lancers and Divisional artillery, the Indian attack was beaten back with heavy losses. [97]

Throughout the night 6-7 September, all the defended localities of 4 Mountain Division were subjected to very heavy and accurate fire from Pakistan artillery, mostly air bursts."[98] 13 Dogra, having suffered heavy losses at Rohiwal during the day, had withdrawn east of Rohi Nala. Pakistan artillery shelling proved too much for the Dogras. They disintegrated and withdrew to Valtoha during the night. 9 J&K was holding onto the eastern bank of Rohi Nala since morning 6 September. By mid-night, the unit was under heavy artillery fire. The battalion HQ and two companies withdrew in small parties to Valtoha.[99] Thus within first 24 hours of the supposedly surprise attack by India, three out of six battalions of 4 Mountain Division had disintegrated and withdrawn deep (almost 10,000 yards) inside India.

Some of the reasons of debacle of 4 Mountain Division were dissipation of Infantry and artillery on a broad front. Out of six infantry battalions, four were launched almost simultaneously at a relative distance from each other. GOC was not in a position to influence the battle at any place. Secondly, 4 Mountain Artillery Brigade lacked range and weight of artillery shell as compared to Pakistan artillery.[100] Pakistan Artillery had a major impact on the battle in the initial stages in the Kasur sector. It is best described by the Indians themselves, "Pakistan artillery fire had been the most telling factor. 4 Mountain Artillery Brigade had no means of locating the hostile guns nor an AOP to send up when the Pakistani guns opened up. Apart from losing practically all FOOs, gunners of the (4 Mountain) Division had a taste of Pakistan artillery fire directed at the gun positions."[101]

Faced with three disintegrating battalions, GOC 4 Mountain Division decided on the morning of 7 September to withdraw and occupy positions north of Khem Karan in the general area Asal Uttar-Bhura and Kuhna-Chima. 4 Mountain Division was forced

to forget about capturing Pakistani territory and go onto defensive position deep inside their own territory. This happened in the first 24 hours of the undeclared war by India. It was one of the finest hours in the history of Pakistan Army.



Map 11.

Source: Lt Gen Mahmud Ahmed, History of Indo-Pak War -1965 Karachi: Services Book Club, 2006, Base Map retrieved from Digital Mapping Unit

PAKISTAN'S OFFENSIVE IN KHEM KARAN SECTOR

At the outbreak of hostilities on 6 September, Pakistani 1 Corps was relieved of operational responsibilities south of River Ravi. Formations south of River Ravi i.e., 10, 11 Infantry Divisions and 1 Armoured Division were thereafter directly controlled by GHQ. 7 Infantry Division which had trained with 1 Armoured Division for strategic tasks had been employed in Operation Grand Slam in Chhamb. The newly raised 11 Division was therefore grouped with 1 Armoured Division for offensive tasks. Maj Gen Hamid the GOC 11 Division was appointed the commander of this force.

Maj Gen Hamid planned to establish a bridgehead across Rohi Nala on the evening of 6 September with one infantry battalion.[102] 1 and 3 Engineer Battalions were to construct a bridge over Rohi Nala on night 6-7 September. 5 Armoured Brigade, placed under command 11 Division, reinforced by 6 Lancers and B squadron 15 Lancers, was to move into the bridgehead at night and break out by morning 7 September and capture line Patti - Harike. It proved to be a too ambitious a plan.[103]

"At 11 am on 6 September, Brig Bashir, commander 5 Armoured Brigade gave his preliminary orders to capture line Bhikkiwind- Patti. He planned to capture Khem Karan with 1 FF and then advance with a tank regiment each on axis Khem Karan-Bhikkiwind Uttar and Khem Karan-Valtoha. Orders to move were received at 12 pm. While 3 (SP) Field Regiment moved by railways, rest of the units moved by road Raiwind- Luliani-Kasur."[104]

At about 11:30 am on 6 September, CO 2 FF was tasked to establish the bridgehead by 11 pm along axis Kasur- Khem Karan.[105] The fire support for this operation was to be provided by 26 Field Regiment, 12 Medium Regiment, 15 (SP) Field Regiment and 21 Medium Regiment.[106] "11 Division was deficient of its organic supply and transport battalion. Dumping of ammunition was therefore carried out with transport borrowed from 1 Armoured Division and civil vehicles picked off the road."[107]

2 FF started its attack to establish the bridgehead sometime between 8 pm and 10 pm. A and D companies of 2 FF led the attack.[108] A company met no resistance. D company bumped into the battalion HQ and depth company of 9 J&K Rifles resulting into latter's rout and retreat. Details have already been covered in battles of Kasur Front. The first phase was completed by 10:40 pm. Phase 2 was completed by 11 pm.[109]

3 Engineer battalion was given the task of preparing the approaches and the exits while the bridge itself was to be constructed by 1 Engineer Battalion. Bridge construction started at about 3:30 am and was completed at 11:30 am, 7 September i.e., it was six hours behind schedule.[110]

While the units were moving forward and the bridge was being constructed, Commander 5 Armoured Brigade delivered his detailed orders around 2 am. 6 Lancers with a company of 1 FF was to advance on the axis Khem Karan-Valtoha. 24 Cavalry with another company of 1 FF was to advance on axis Khem Karan - Bhikkiwind. 1 FF less two companies, with a squadron of 24 Cavalry was to advance between the two armoured regiments on axis Khem Karan-Asal Uttar-Valtoha.

By afternoon 7 September, 4 Mountain Division had occupied a new defensive position north east of Khem Karan. 1/9 Gurkha Rifles was deployed astride Mile 37- Bhura Kuhna. 18 Rajputana Rifles was defending area south of Asal Uttar. 4 Grenadiers was deployed south of Chima. Remnants of 9 J&K Rifles were deployed north of Asal Uttar.[111]

"At about 9 am, tanks of 6 Lancers started crossing BRBL Canal. The first tank went over the side of the bridge and turned turtle killing all the crew except one."[112] After some hesitation, the crossing of BRBL started again. A squadron 6 Lancers arrived at the Rohi Nala Bridge by mid-day 7 September. Here its first tank stalled on the steep exit. It was with considerable effort that this tank cleared the exit."[113] 1 FF with nine tanks of 6 Lancers available in the bridgehead were ordered to raid Khem Karan. The

raid began at 3 pm. "When the raid started, A squadron 9 Deccan Horse was in the process of extricating the two abandoned companies of 9 J&K Rifles still holding eastern bank of Rohi Nala. The raiding force struck both the Indian elements in their left flank. The enemy retreated, leaving two destroyed tanks, sixty dead and twenty-five prisoners.[114] After the raid, 1 FF group returned to the safety of the bridgehead.

At 5 pm on 7 September, Gen Hamid issued his orders for operations on 8 September. 21 Brigade was given the task of taking over the defence of the bridgehead. 5 Armoured Brigade was to breakout at first light 8 September. 1 Armoured Division was to build-up in the bridgehead and be ready to breakout.[115] 6 Lancers with a company of 1 FF was tasked to secure Khem Karan. Thereafter, 24 Cavalry was tasked to outflank Khem Karan from the left and cut road Khem Karan-Bhikkiwind at Chima. 6 Lancers was tasked to advance on axis Khem Karan-Patti and capture Valtoha.[116] By morning 8 September, there were two brigades in the bridgehead. 21 Brigade had 5 and 2 FF. 5 Armoured Brigade had 6 Lancers and 1 FF. 24 Cavalry was just moving in.

"5 Armoured Brigade's operation began at 7 am on 8 September with A and C squadrons of 6 Lancers moving out of the bridgehead to clear Khem Karan."[117] By 8:45 am C squadron had captured the road bifurcation north of Khem Karan. CO 6 Lancers, therefore, ordered C Company 1 FF to move up and clear the town.[118] The town was cleared by 10:30 am.

24 Cavalry led by B squadron started its advance once the tail of 6 Lancers cleared the area south west of Khem Karan. It crossed Khem Karan distributary at 8:30 am and reached Bhura Karimpur at about 10:30 am. Manawan was reached by 11:30 am. Here it was ordered by CO 24 Cavalry to head towards Chima. The squadron commander turned his tanks towards Chima. The squadron had hardly gone a thousand yards beyond Mastgarh minor that Indians opened up with all weapons. The squadron had

hit the main defences of 4 Grenadiers. After losing three tanks the squadron wheeled a bit right and reached the road some 800 yards south of Chima. A squadron following B squadron was fired upon at Bhura Kuhna by 1/9 Gurkha Rifles defending the area. The squadron commander instead of bypassing the enemy got his squadron engaged in firefight with 1/9 Gurkhas.[119] At around 10:30 am, commander 5 Armoured Brigade ordered commander C squadron 24 Cavalry to advance along road Khem Karan and reach Chima. On encountering 1/9 Gurkhas holding the road, the squadron kept on advancing keeping the road on their left and reached Asal Uttar by 2:45 pm. In the process the squadron lost four tanks and inflicted equal number of tank casualties on the Indians. 1/9 Gurkhas and 4 Grenadiers had been under Pakistan artillery fire from 8:30 am in the morning. In early afternoon, portion of defences of 1/9 Gurkhas had been overrun and bypassed by C squadron 24 Cavalry. 4 Grenadiers in their depth was in contact with B squadron. Under this pressure, 1/9 Gurkhas abandoned their defences and withdrew north-east ward.[120]

CO 24 Cavalry moving behind B squadron was not in contact with his other two squadrons. By 4:30 pm he came to know about the exploits and location of A and C squadrons. Being out of wireless communications with Brigade HQ, he sent his second-in-command to Brigade HQ and asked for infantry to hold the captured area. He returned at 5:45 pm and conveyed the order of commander 5 Armoured Brigade to withdraw to the bridgehead as infantry was not available to defend the captured area. The regiment pulled back behind their start line by 11:30 pm 8 September.[121]

1 FF group started its advance at 11:30 am on 8 September on Khem Karan - Valtoha axis with B squadron 15 Lancers as vanguard. Barely thousand yards north of Khem Karan they came in contact with 18 Rajputana Rifles, reinforced by a troop of 9 Horse. The armour squadron halted and B Company 1 FF was pushed forward. It also got pinned down. There was no further

worth mentioning activity in this area on 8 September.

Further south, 6 Lancers comprising A and B squadrons and C company 1 FF had been tasked to advance south of railway line towards Valtoha. B squadron led the advance. Faced with no opposition, the squadron advanced at good speed and soon came across Machhike Minor. It was crossed at RD 5. Wheeled vehicles could not cross the Minor and had to be left behind. This included the artillery battery commander and the FOO. It proved to be the undoing of the manoeuvre. Infantry support was already too little i.e., only one platoon and now the manoeuvre was devoid of fire power also. The tanks broke the banks of the Minor, creating unintended inundation of the area. B squadron reached Valtoha railway station by 3 pm. CO 6 Lancers asked for artillery support and additional infantry for further advance. Tanks were also low on fuel. Replenishment was only possible if 1 FF group had opened the road. Guns were out of range and no infantry could be spared. As there was no possibility of 1 FF group clearing the road and it was too dangerous to leave 6 Lancers out on a limb, therefore, commander 5 Armoured Brigade ordered it to withdraw to the bridgehead for night leaguer. During the withdrawal, seven tanks got bogged down in the bog created at Machhike Minor. Only four could be recovered which kept trickling into bridgehead till 10 am, 9 September. Other three were destroyed by Indians on night 9-10 September.[122]

On the Indian side, situation appeared to be desperate too. At 2:30 pm 8 September, 11 Corps released 2 Armoured Brigade, the Corps reserve to 4 Mountain Division. On 8 September, 2 Armoured Brigade had only 3 Cavalry available in the area to support 4 Mountain Division. A squadron 3 Cavalry was ordered to move on road Patti - Khem Karan. Rest of the regiment moved on axis Bhikkiwind - Khem Karan. B squadron reached 4 Grenadiers around 2:30 pm and went into action against 24 Cavalry. C squadron reached Karimpur in the evening after 24 Cavalry had already withdrawn. At 8:15 pm, 8 September, 8 Cavalry less C squadron was ordered south from Amritsar to

Pahuwind on road Khalra- Barki. At 7:30 am 9 September, C squadron was also reverted to it and placed north of Rohi Nala on road Amritsar- Khem Karan.

By sun down on 8 September, 5 Armoured Brigade had withdrawn all its three battle groups to the bridge head, losing all the hard-fought gains of the day.

4 Armoured Brigade was ordered to move into the bridgehead on night 8-9 September. First tank of 5 Horse crossed Rohi Nala at 4 pm 8 September. Complete unit was inside bridgehead by 5 am 9 September. It was followed by 15 (SP) Field Regiment, 10 FF, HQ 4 Armoured brigade and 4 Cavalry.[123] As the sun rose on 9 September, Indian Air Force came over the bridge head. They had plenty of targets to engage.

4 Armoured Brigade planned to capture Chima with 5 Horse and 10 FF in four phases on 9 September. 5 Horse was to advance on axis Mastgarh-Duhal Kuhna. 10 FF was to capture Bhura Karimpur, Kalanjar Uttar and Chima. The railway line was the start line and H hour was fixed at 12 pm.[124] 5 Horse crossed the start line at 1 pm and reached Mastgarh by 3:30 pm. By 5 pm, 5 Horse had reached a small bridge on Khem Karan Minor. 10 FF left Mastgarh for Bhura Karimpur at 3 pm. It had reached barely halfway to its objective that operation was called off as only half hour of day light was left. Commander 4 Armoured Brigade, Brig Lumb withdrew both his units to Mastgarh for night leaguer. Guides were sent to fetch 4 Cavalry to the brigade leaguer. This unit arrived south of Mastgarh at 4 pm on 10 September.

On 9 September, 5 Armoured Brigade ordered 6 Lancers with a company of 1 FF to advance between the track and the railway line to Valtoha and 24 Cavalry with two companies of 5 FF to advance along the main road. 1 FF less two companies was tasked to hold a firm base north of Khem Karan. C squadron 6 Lancers advanced along track Khem Karan-Valtoha and ran straight into the main defences of 18 Rajputana at 4:30 pm.[125] "Under cover of artillery fire, C squadron tried to manoeuvre first from the west

and then from the east of 18 Rajputana Rifles which had been reinforced by B squadron of 9 Deccan Horse. Due to stiff enemy resistance and approaching darkness the squadron withdrew from the battle.

B squadron 6 Lancers, advancing along the railway line, came across the eastern flank of 18 Rajputana Rifles along Machhike Minor at 1:30 pm. B squadron punched a hole through the enemy defences after losing two out of available seven tanks and moving at full speed took up positions facing Valtoha- along Rattoke Minor by 5 pm. Moving along the railway line, the squadron (5 tanks) went past the defences of 9 J&K and 13 Dogra, without being detected and reached south of Valtoha. Lt Col Sahibzad Gul the Commanding Officer of 6 Lancers ordered A squadron to follow B squadron and himself also moved forward.[126] While crossing Machhike Minor a few hundred yards upstream from where B squadron had crossed, he ran into defences of 18 Rajputana. He was standing in his cupola when he was killed by a burst of machine gun fire. A squadron after crossing Machhike Minor got dispersed due to high crops in the fields. While squadron commander moved forward and joined B squadron south of Valtoha, the rest of the tanks came back. At 10 pm, B squadron along with one tank of A squadron, on orders from their Regimental Headquarters, started their move back along the railway line. They reached regiment's leaguer at Police Headquarters at 1 am on 10 September.[127]

24 Cavalry and two companies of 5 FF started their advance at 4 pm on 9 September. The advance started late as CO 24 Cavalry was evacuated at 3:45 pm due to exhaustion. Under Maj Sabir ud Din the Regiment moved forward and ran into the defences of 4 and 7 Grenadiers. Soon it was dark and the Regiment established its night leaguer along the road, south of Bhura Kuhna.

Around midnight 9-10 September, GOC of 1 Armoured Division formulated his plan for operation on 10 September. He planned to push 5 Armoured Brigade along the road Khem Karan-

Bhikkiwind to capture Chima. 4 Armoured Brigade was to execute an outflanking move from the west and cut the road at Milestone 32. 3 Armoured Brigade, comprising 19 Lancers and 7 FF was retained as divisional reserve. It moved into the bridge-head on night 9-10 September.[128]

Commander 4 Armoured Brigade ordered 4 Cavalry to advance through Duhal Kuhna-Lakhna and then toward the final objective i.e., Milestone 32. 4 Cavalry was given A company of 10 FF, and B squadron of 5 Horse was attached with 10 FF for this operation. 10 FF was to advance east of 4 Cavalry but was to remain west of Khem Karan Minor.

On the Indian side, 4 Mountain Division retained its dispositions of 9 September. However, 2 Independent Armoured Brigade adjusted its positions. 3 Cavalry's A squadron was deployed along Kasur Branch and Rohi Nala, B squadron at Milestone 34 and C squadron between Chitti Khui and Mahmudpura. 8 Cavalry's squadron at Valtoha was deployed on the Khem Karan distributary. C squadron of 9 Horse was tasked to closely watch route between Dibbipura and Nawanpind. A and B squadrons of 9 Horse were tasked to support defences of 7 and 62 Mountain Brigades.[129]

4 Cavalry started its advance at 5:20 am from Mastgarh. At 10 am, it was found that 10 FF was heading towards Sankhatra and 4 Cavalry toward Duhal Kuhna i.e., 10 FF was moving west instead of east of 4 Cavalry.[130] At 10:30 am, A squadron 4 Cavalry following the Khem Karan Minor, moved into the trap laid by B and C squadrons of Indian 3 Cavalry. After losing two tanks, 4 Cavalry halted its advance at 12:30 pm. By, 3 pm, some tanks were lost to enemy fire and some were bogged down in irrigated fields. By 4 pm, CO 4 Cavalry reported that he was near Mahmudpura but under heavy shelling and running out of petrol. By sunset, the regiment reached its objective with only ten tanks. Six of these were running as three were bogged nearby and fourth was without fuel.[131]

10 FF made their first contact with enemy when their leading elements reached Lakhna. Indian 3 Cavalry, A squadron's tanks guarding Rohi Nala knocked out two APCs of the leading company. Indian tanks were driven off by artillery and antitank fire of 10 FF. Realising that 4 Cavalry was not on its west but on its east, 10 FF reported the situation to Brigade Headquarters. Brigade Commander arrived in 10 FF at Lakhna at about 3 pm. Instead of directing 10 FF to move due east and reach Milestone 32, he ordered the regiment to withdraw to Khem Karan Minor and follow its original route. The move back had hardly started at 4 pm when it was told to withdraw to Kalanjar Uttar and then reach Chima by last light. Earlier at 2 pm, on the request of HQ 4 Armoured Brigade, A squadron of 12 Cavalry had been moved forward to guard left flank of 4 Armoured Brigade.[132] Not knowing about the move of squadron ex 12 Cavalry, 10 FF mistook them as enemy tanks when withdrawing towards Sankhatra but soon the mistake was rectified. When B Company 10 FF neared Duhul Kuhna it was engaged by Indian tanks and artillery fire by the enemy deployed on Khem Karan Minor north of village Kalanjar Uttar. 10 FF responded by machine gun and artillery fire. Realising that route to Chima was strongly defended, CO 10 FF decided first to move south west of Manawan and then to Bhaura Karimpur. Battalion Headquarters and C Company were pinned down by Indian artillery fire and could not follow B Company. They moved to Sankhatra and then westward across Rohi Nala where all their APCs got bogged down.[133] At approximately 5:30 pm, Brigade Headquarters had its last contact with 4 Cavalry which was just short of its objective. At the same time, it lost control over 10 FF. B company had dispersed south towards the bridgehead, C Company crossed Rohi Nala west of Sankhatra and A company landed near Luliani. The unit was reassembled with great difficulty the next day. In short, by sunset, 4 Armoured Brigade was in shambles. 10 FF had dispersed over a large area and 4 Cavalry had ceased to exist as a unit. It was left with 7 out of 44 tanks. Nine of its bogged down tanks were captured in running condition by the Indians. Four officers

including the CO and twenty-one men had become prisoners.

The operation of 5 Armoured Brigade on 10 September also failed to achieve any result. Like previous days, the operation started late on 10 September. The objective of the day was Chima. The plan was to attack with 24 Cavalry reinforced by a company of 1 FF and two of 5 FF. 24 Cavalry planned to capture Asal Uttar with A and C squadrons. The attack came to a halt when it met main defence of 4 Mountain Division supported by hull down tanks of 9 Deccan Horse. The attack by two companies of 5 FF also failed when one of the company commanders was killed and the other was wounded. At about 2 pm, Brig Bashir, commander 5 Armoured Brigade and Brig Shami, the commander artillery, were moving to their forward troops. They were followed by CO 24 Cavalry in a jeep. They crossed into the no man's land near Milestone 38 and at about 2:30 pm reached Milestone 37. At this place, Indians opened fire on the approaching jeeps with automatics and anti-tank weapons. Brig Shami was struck by a bullet in his head and died instantly. His jeep went off the road and overturned. Brig Bashir survived with few bruises. He took cover in a nearby sugarcane field. CO 24 Cavalry sped back to Milestone 38 where some tanks of A squadron 24 Cavalry were preparing for the next attack. One of the troops of tanks was rushed forward to rescue the two Brigadiers. Only Brig Bashir returned. Brig Shami was later buried by the Indians and his body was handed over to 3 (SP) Field Regiment after the war.[134] Due to this mishap, there was no further advance by 5 Armoured Brigade on 10 September.

On 10 September at 10:30 am, 3rd Armoured Brigade was ordered to pull out of the bridgehead and move to Lahore i.e., just after twelve hours being in the bridge-head.[135] On 11 September, Maj Gen Naseer ordered all units to rest and reorganise and prepare for fresh attack on 12 September.

11 September proved to be the worst day of 1965 war for Pakistan Army. Due to fall of Phillaurah in Sialkot sector, there was great anxiety in GHQ. It was feared that Indians may

breakthrough Pakistani defences in the area. Therefore, 1 Armoured Division was ordered to leave 5 Armoured Brigade at Khem Karan under Command 11 Division and move to Sialkot sector. 4 Armoured Brigade started its move to Sialkot immediately.

This ended the offensive of 1 Armoured Division in Khem Karan Sector. The Division lost sixty-two tanks in this operation. One of the many reasons for the failure was absence of a Corps HQ to coordinate the operations of 11 Division and 1 Armoured Division.

By midday 11 September, Indians assessed that after three days of intense battles and losses, Pakistani 1 Armoured Division was a spent force and withdrawing from the sector. Commander Western Command and Commander 11 Corps wanted 4 Mountain Division to go onto offensive and not only liberate Khem Karan but move up to eastern bank of BRBL Canal. For this operation, 4 Mountain Division was reinforced by 4 Sikh Light Infantry and 2 Mahar.[136] Both the units along with 9 J&K Rifles were placed under 7 Mountain Brigade. The brigade was reinforced with a squadron of 9 Horse, two troops of 3 Cavalry and a company of engineers to execute the attack.

On Pakistani side, the responsibility to defend Khem Karan pocket was given to 21 Brigade comprising 2 and 5 FF. 5 FF was deployed north east of Khem Karan covering area from railway line inclusive to road Khem Karan-Amritsar inclusive. 2 FF was defending area west of 5 FF from Khem Karan distributary to 10r inclusive. 5 Armoured brigade's units withdrew south of Khem Karan Distributary. 6 Lancers with 21 tanks was positioned behind 5 FF defences. 24 Cavalry was located west of 6 Lancers behind 2 FF. B Squadron 15 Lancers was between PAP HQ and railway line. 3 (SP) Field Regiment was deployed south of Machhike. A squadron 12 Cavalry was south of Sankhatra.[137]

Indian 7 Mountain Brigade planned to employ 4 Sikh to infiltrate along railway line and establish blocking position south

west of Khem Karan town by 0500 hours 12 September. 2 Mahar with a squadron of 9 Horse and two troops of 3 Cavalry were to advance along the main road, cross Khem Karan distributary and link up with 4 Sikh.[138] 4 Sikh, with 220 men, started moving along the railway line at mid night. At about 4:30 am, 12 September, the unit thought they had reached near their objective and decided to hide in a sugarcane field. In the morning, they found them self in the middle of three Pakistani units i.e., 6 Lancer, 26 (SP) Field Battery ex 3 (SP) Field Regiment and B squadron 15 Lancers. They were fired at by the tanks of 15 Lancers and guns of 26 (SP) Field Battery at almost point-blank ranges. Troops of 4 Sikh tried to run in every possible direction. Only a few escaped. Out of 220, about 126 to 150 including the Commanding Officer became prisoners and 20 were killed. The prisoners were captured by all the three above mentioned Pakistan army units.[139] "Oblivious of 4 Sikh's fate, 2 Mahar began their advance at 5 am led by the tanks of 9 Horse. They reached Khem Karan distributary at 10 am opposite defences of 2 and 5 FF. Pakistani troops held their fire till the Indians were within range and then opened with artillery, tank and infantry weapons. 2 Mahar suffered 80 casualties and 9 Horse lost eight tanks. The attack failed. Undeterred, Commander 7 Mountain Brigade tasked 9 J&K having only two companies but reinforced by 2 tank troops each from 3 Cavalry and 9 Horse to renew the attack. The assault began at 5 pm.[140] As in the morning, the attacking troops were met with intense artillery, tank and infantry fire. Two tank troops managed to cross the Distributary but got bogged down and were captured. By 6:30 pm the attack fizzled out and the Indians withdrew.[141] Debacle of 4 Sikh and heavy casualties suffered by 4 Mahar was a big shock to the Indians. It was not before 21 September that 4 Mountain Division under took another offensive to recapture Khem Karan.

Indian 29 Brigade and 41 Mountain Brigade were placed under command 4 Mountain Division at 8 pm on 18 September. Both the brigades arrived in 4 Mountain Division area on 19 September. An attack on Khem Karan was planned on night September 21-22. 41

Mountain Brigade supported by a squadron of 9 Horse was tasked to attack Khem Karan from the west and capture it by 2 am. 29 Brigade with another squadron of 9 Horse was tasked to attack later from the east and capture eastern portion of the town. Artillery support comprised the whole of Artillery 4 Mountain Division, 1 (SP) Field Regiment, 40 Medium Regiment and 66 Field Regiment.

Pakistani defences in Khem Karan were much stronger than had been anticipated by the Indians. Between Sankhatra and Mastgarh, armour subunits with tanks equal to one armour regiment were present. 10 FF was holding area from inclusive Mastgarh to left edge of 2 FF. 5 FF had been reinforced with a company of 6 Baloch. This force was being supported by artillery comprising six field batteries, (3 (SP) Field Regiment and 26 Field Regiment) five medium batteries (12 and 21 Medium Regiments) and 2 Heavy batteries. (130 and 131 Heavy batteries of 35 Heavy Regiment)[142]

41 Mountain Brigade's attack, led by 1/8 Gurkha fell on 2 FF defences. The Guides displayed good fire discipline and waited till 1/8 Gurkha were inside the killing area of their weapons. "The Gurkhas were thrown back in confusion".[143] Then 15 Kumaon was ordered to resume attack. By morning, they managed a small foothold in 2 FF defences. However, at day break, a quick counter attack, supported by a troop of tanks of 6 Lancers, evicted the enemy from this penetration. Kumaon battalion tried again to attack, but were mowed down by artillery, tank and automatics fire. Having suffered 81 casualties, 15 Kumaon withdrew. Attack by 29 Brigade from the east fell on the defences of 5 FF and met the fate of 41 Mountain Brigade. Ceasefire on 23 September formally ended the war.

THE SIALKOT FRONT

15 Division was responsible for defence of Sialkot Sector from Marala Head-works on River Chenab in the north till River Ravi in the south. There was no natural or manmade obstacle from

River Chenab till east of Shakargarh where River Ravi formed boundary between the two countries. "15 Division had eight infantry battalions distributed into four brigades. It had four armoured regiments and a full complement of divisional artillery. Only 25 Cavalry had M-47 and M-48 tanks. 20 Lancers had Chaffee tanks while 31 and 33 Tank Delivery Units had Sherman II tanks. Divisional artillery had 4, 18, 31 and 39 Field Regiments, 8 Medium Regiment, 90 Mortar Battery and 108 Division Locating Battery. Three infantry brigades were deployed while the fourth was in reserve. 101 Infantry Brigade comprising 20 Lancers, 19 Punjab and 2 Baloch covered Jammu-Sialkot axis. 24 Infantry Brigade comprising 25 Cavalry, 2 Punjab and 3 FF was defending Charwa- Chawinda approach. 115 Brigade comprising 3 Punjab, 4 FF and 33 TDU covered approaches to Narowal and Jassar from Dharam and Dera Nanak. 104 Infantry Brigade consisting of 31 TDU and 14 Baloch was located at Uggoke as Division reserve."[144]

"The main Indian attack across international border was executed by Indian 1 Corps, raised in April-May 1965. The task assigned to 1 Corps was; "to cross the border between road Jammu - Sialkot - and Degh Nadi and secure a bridge-head in area Bhagowal-Phillaurah crossroads south of Tharoh, with a view to advancing towards MRL Canal and eventually to the line Dhallewali-Wuhilam-Daska-Mandhali." 1 Corps comprised 1 Armoured Division, 6 Mountain Division, 14 Division and 26 Division. Additional artillery allotted to the Corps was 24 and 71 Medium Regiments.[145] 6 Mountain Division had two infantry brigades i.e., 69 and 99 under its command. 14 Division had only 35 Infantry Brigade under it when it arrived for offensive. 26 Division had three infantry brigades with four infantry battalions and one armoured regiment.[146] 6 Mountain Division and 14 Division were tasked to secure lodgement across the border from Maharajke to Nakhnal. 1 Armoured Division was to breakout from this lodgement towards MRL Canal. 26 Division was to contain Pakistani forces on Jammu-Sialkot front.[147]

Due to longer distances to be travelled by troops of Indian 1 Corps, commencement of its operation was delayed to night 7-8 September, while Indian 11 Corps operating against Lahore started its offensive on morning 6 September. Jassar enclave being defended by 115 Brigade of 15 Division was attacked on 6 September by 29 Infantry Brigade which was part of Indian 11 Corps. 11 Corps wanted to protect its right flank against any Pakistani offensive from Jassar enclave. The protective attack by 29 Brigade against Jassar, just because it preceded the main attack in Sialkot sector by almost 42 hours, appeared to the defenders of Sialkot sector as a full-scale attack across River Ravi. The initial response against Jassar attack nearly imbalanced the defences of 15 Division at the time of commencement of main Indian attack on night 7-8 September.

THE JASSAR BATTLE

Along River Ravi, between Pakistani town of Narowal and Indian town of Dera Baba Nanak are two important enclaves. The Indian enclave, north of River Ravi and just south of Narowal town is called Dharam. Upstream of Dharm lies Pakistani Jassar enclave south of River Ravi. A pre-independence railroad bridge connected Jassar enclave with Pakistan mainland across River Ravi.

Pakistani 115 Infantry Brigade had been tasked to defend Jassar enclave. 115 Brigade had deployed 3 Punjab to guard Jassar Bridge. 4 FF was deployed across Kotli Bajwa and Narowal track, A Company 13 FF (R&S) was deployed to cover the approach from Dharam enclave to Jassar and 33 TDU was at Narowal as Brigade reserve.[148]

3 Punjab's A company and two platoons of C Company were deployed inside the enclave. Two platoons of C Company were defending the southern end of the bridge. B Company was deployed south of Miadi Nana and D company was at flood protection embankment north of Sahneke village.[149]

Indian 29 Infantry Brigade comprising three infantry battalions was tasked to clear Jassar enclave as a protection against any Pakistani attack on the northern flank of Indian 11 Corps. 29 Brigade had been reinforced with B squadron 14 Horse. Artillery support was provided by 5 Field Regiment and a light battery. The attack commenced at 3 am on 6 September by two infantry battalions. By 5 am, they had overrun one platoon of C company 3 Punjab and captured southern end of the bridge. Commander 115 Brigade, Brig Muzaffar Uddin moved a squadron of 33 TDU to the bridge to support a counter attack by 3 Punjab. The counter attack across the bridge went in at 12:35 pm. It was led by a troop of tanks of 33 TDU and followed by a platoon of C Company 3 Punjab under its brave company commander Capt. Raja Asghar Ali. 1/5 Gorkhas were defending the bridge. Their one recoilless rifle covering the bridge was knocked out by Pakistan artillery.[150] "The forward two companies of 1/5 Gorkha Rifles were over run.[151]" The counter attack succeeded in recapturing the southern end of the bridge. 3 Punjab reinforced its C company with a platoon each of B and D Companies.

Commander 29 Indian Brigade decided to launch his third battalion supported by a squadron armour to recapture the southern side of the bridge. H hour was 2:45 am on 7 September. Entire weight of Indian attack fell on C Company 3 Punjab defending the area. Despite stiff resistance by the defenders, area up to the bridge was lost to Indians by 6:30 am. Many survivors of C Company swam to the home bank. The defeat shook everyone in HQ 115 Brigade and HQ 15 Division. Repeated Indian attacks appeared as prelude to a major offensive across the river.[152] There were reports of Indians having gained a foot hold on the northern side of the river. Based on such reports, GOC 15 Division ordered the demolition of the bridge at 7:50 am. The orders were executed at 8 am 7 September. At 9:45 am the Commanding Officer of 3 Punjab ordered his two companies inside the enclave to withdraw to the home bank of the river. 208 personnel crossed on 7 September, 15 on 8 September, and five on 9 September.[153]

Commander 115 Brigade appealed for reinforcements at 8:30 am and again at 10:15 am. GOC 15 Division, at about 6 pm, ordered 24 Brigade to move to Jassar, leaving behind one infantry battalion and its artillery, and be prepared to counter attack the imaginary enemy bridgehead. Commander 1 Corps ordered Artillery 4 Corps to move to Jassar to support the counter attack by 24 Brigade. By 10 pm, Commander 24 Brigade, commanding officers of 2 Punjab and 25 Cavalry reached HQ 115 Brigade. By 2 am (8 September) bulk of Artillery 4 Corps were in action in Jassar sector. While planning at HQ 115 Brigade for the counter attack was still under-way, a report from Sialkot informed that the enemy was shelling the FDL's and an attack appeared imminent at Sialkot and Charwa. Soon 24 Brigade and Artillery 4 Corps were ordered back to Chawinda and Pasrur. The phantom bridge-head at Jassar was forgotten and all attention turned to Sialkot front.[154] On 9 September, 115 Brigade was ordered to shed 4 FF, A Company 13 FF (R&S) with only one platoon, A squadron 33 TDU and 41 Field battery ex 18 Field Regiment. On 18 September, 115 Brigade fell under the command of 8 Division.

4 FF and A squadron 33 TDU were employed to clear Dharm enclave. They secured it by 6 pm, 6 September.[155]

BATTLE FOR SIALKOT

India had planned to capture lodgement in area Maharajke-Charwa-Nakhnal with 6 Mountain Division and 14 Infantry Division. 1 Armoured Division was to breakout from this lodgement. The flanks of this offensive were to be protected by 26 Infantry Division in the west and 14 Infantry Division in the east. This area was being defended by Pakistani 15 Infantry Division. 15 Infantry Division's defence was based on the hypothesis that Indian main attack would come along the road Jammu-Sialkot. Accordingly, 101 Infantry Brigade was holding the approach Jammu-Sialkot as the main defensive effort. Two strike forces of a brigade each were at Uggoke (104 Brigade) and Phillaurah (24 Brigade). There were two flanking forces i.e., 9 Baloch in Chaprar

and 115 Brigade in Narowal-Jassar. 101 Brigade occupied its defences on 1 September. Protective elements comprised 20 Lancers, C Company 19 Punjab and C Company 13 FF (R&S). The main defences were occupied by 19 Punjab, 2 Baloch and C squadron 31 TDU. One section of 19 Punjab was deployed at Ura Bridge.[156] 4 Field Regiment was in direct support of 101 Brigade.

Area between Aik Nala and Degh Nadi was the responsibility of 24 Brigade designated as Strike Force Alfa. Its secondary task was to defend all approaches coming into Pakistan though general area Charwa. It comprised 3 FF, 2 Punjab, 25 Cavalry and B Company 13 FF (R&S). Artillery support consisted of 31 Field Regiment less one battery.

104 Brigade, the Strike Force Bravo consisted of 14 Baloch and 31 TDU less one squadron.[157] Shakargarh and Phuklean salient were being defended by Rangers and Mujahids.

Indian 26 Infantry Division was tasked to advance into Pakistan territory as deep as possible, contain Sialkot and thereby provide protection to the western flank of 1 Corps operation and Jammu city.[158] 26 Infantry Division had two infantry brigades. 162 Brigade with C squadron 18 Cavalry was tasked to advance along road Jammu-Sialkot. 168 Brigade with A squadron 18 Cavalry was to advance south of Aik Nala on Bajragarhi-Sialkot axis.

At about 10 pm on 7 September, the Indian Artillery opened up on the advance positions of 101 Brigade. At 1 am, Headquarters 101 Brigade permitted the advance positions to withdraw. B squadron 20 Lancers fell back at 3:30 am. Indian 162 Brigade moved into Unche Wains-Kundanpur by 2:30 am and remained there till morning. At first light 8 September, C squadron 18 Cavalry led the advance of 162 Brigade. Salia was cleared by 10 am. After some reorganization, the Indians moved forward and contacted the main defences being manned by 19 Punjab and 2 Baloch, by 1:30 pm. The infantry opened up on the enemy which all the while was pounded by Artillery 15 Division too. After losing two tanks, enemy withdrew to Salia at 2:30 pm. Meanwhile

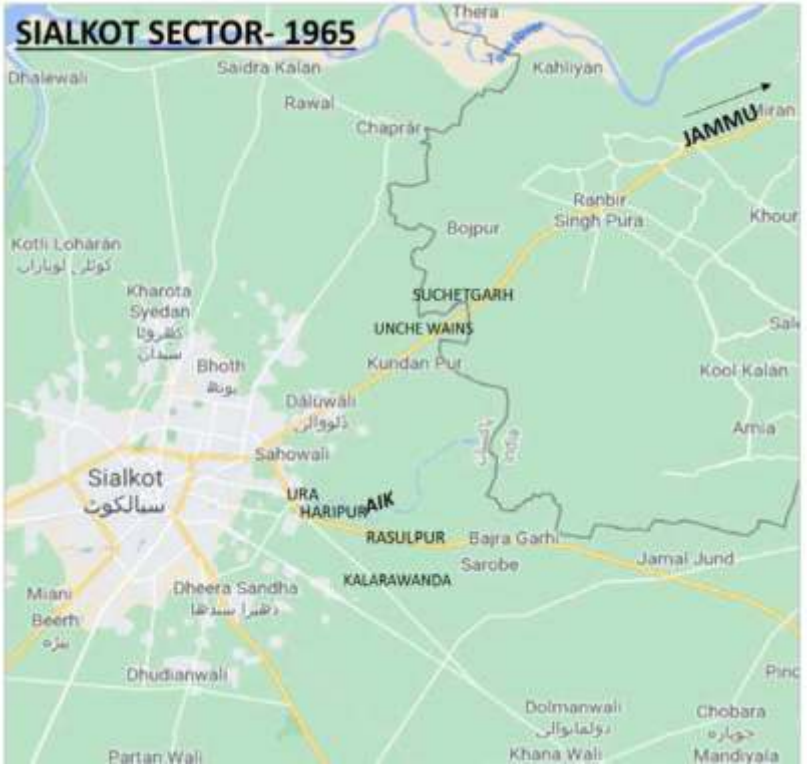
B squadron 18 Cavalry had crossed Palkhu Nala north of Khane Chak and started advancing toward track Chaprar-Sialkot. An artillery observer deployed with 2 Baloch picked up this new threat and directed artillery fire at it. The enemy was forced to retreat. After last light enemy renewed its attack but it too was beaten back by the artillery and infantry fire.

The second brigade of 26 Indian Infantry Division i.e., 168 Brigade was tasked to advance along axis Bajragarhi- Sialkot. Bajragarhi was being defended by one platoon of 13 FF (R&S). The R&S platoon withdrew after offering some resistance to attack by 5/4 Gurkha Rifles. Thereafter the advance of 168 Brigade from Bajragarhi to Ura Bridge was led by A squadron 18 Cavalry. The Ura Bridge was being defended by one infantry section under Havildar Juma Khan of D Company of 19 Punjab. At 11 am Havildar Juma reported to his Company Commander that a few enemy tanks were approaching Ura Bridge. While Juma Khan was told to stick to his position, Commander 101 Brigade rushed C squadron 31 TDU to Ura Bridge.[159] The small arms fire by Juma Khan's infantry section and arrival of 31 TDU tanks, forced A squadron 18 Cavalry to withdraw towards Dajowal.

At 6 am 8 September, Gen Tikka Khan was ordered by GHQ to take over the command of 15 Division. At 8:30 am he was at Sialkot and took over the command. By that time, Indian 1 Corps main effort against 24 Brigade had not been identified. Indian 26 Infantry Division appeared to be the main threat to Sialkot.

Gen Tikka ordered Division reserves i.e., 104 Brigade at 5 pm to launch a counter attack against Indian penetration at Suchetgarh and capture it by morning 9 September. 104 Brigade had 20 Lancers less a squadron, two companies of 9 Baloch, one company of 14 Baloch, one squadron of 31 TDU and a detachment of 13 FF (R&S). H hour was 5 am, 9 September.[160] It was a hasty attack with troops collected from all corners of the Division. There was no time for reconnaissance or coordination among the attacking troops. Due to breakdowns, only 5 tanks of squadron 31 TDU reached FUP. Some of the tanks of 20 Lancers also got

bogged down en-route. Only one company of 9 Baloch reached the FUP. At 5:10 am, the three depleted squadrons went into action with one troop up in extended line formation. At Palkhu Nala, attack came to a halt. While crossing the Nala, four more tanks bogged down. Once across the Palkhu Nala, the small force was subjected to combined enemy artillery, tanks and antitank fire. 20 Lancers lost two more tanks. The Indians were well prepared to receive this counter attack. The attacking force disintegrated and kept on trickling back to their old positions during the next night.[161]



Map 12.
Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

On Bajragarhi axis, at first light 9 September, 8 J&K Rifles advanced towards Kalarawanda and a squadron 18 Cavalry with one infantry company advanced toward Ura Bridge. "An air borne observer engaged the advancing Indians in Akalgarh, Kalarawanda and Haripur."[162] Capt. Ravinder Singh of 18 Cavalry was killed and rest of the enemy withdrew. 168 Brigade resumed their advance again on 10 September. Faced with heavy Pakistani artillery shelling they again withdrew. However, on 13 September, Indians succeeded in creeping forward and secured Kalarawanda and later Rasulpur on 14 September. At Rasulpur, squadron 31 TDU came in contact with the Indian armour.

On 12 September, around 3 pm, 104 Brigade was deployed north of 101 Brigade with its units in defence along Sialkot - Chaprar road.

On arrival of 6 Armoured Division in the sector, area between Aik Nala and Degh Nadi was made its operational responsibility. On 11 September, inter-formation boundary between 15 Division and 6 Armoured Division was demarcated. It ran along line Raja Harpal-Kalarawanda -Pathanwali- Mandiawala inclusive to 15 Division. 24 Brigade went under command 6 Armoured Division but 115 Brigade remained under 15 Division. On 12 September, 15 Division placed B squadron 31 TDU and a platoon of R&S south of Aik Nala.[163] By 3 pm, 12 September, 10 Brigade comprising 14 Punjab and 6 FF moved in and took over area south of Aik Nala. 14 Punjab was deployed astride road Sialkot-Pasrur in Miles 6 and 7 and 6 FF was deployed south of Aik Nala in Faiz Bagh area. On 14 September, 10 Brigade recaptured Kalarawanda by employing B Company of 6 FF and B squadron of 31 TDU. Squadron 31 TDU withdrew for night leaguer and before company of 6 FF could properly reorganise, Indians launched an attack at 9 pm and regained control of Kalarawanda.[164] A quick attack was launched by a company each of 6 FF, 14 Punjab and a squadron of 31 TDU in broad day light at 10 am 16 September to capture Kalarawanda. After suffering heavy casualties, the attack was called off at 10:30 am. On 17 September, 10 Brigade along with 6

FF were moved to Pasrur. 14 Punjab and 31 TDU were left behind to defend area south of Aik Nala.[165] On 18 September, a newly raised Headquarter 54 Infantry Brigade took over the area south of Aik Nala with 4 Baloch and available troops in the area, under its command.

On the Indian side, 26 Infantry Division was reinforced by 52 Mountain Brigade on 12 September. 54 Mountain Brigade was tasked to capture Tilakpur and Muhadipur on night 17-18 September. The area was being defended by 104 Brigade. 52 Mountain Brigade launched its attack at 11 pm on 18 September. Area from Muhadipur to Tilakpur was being guarded by a platoon of 13 FF (R&S). This platoon was pushed back by two Indian battalions and the objective was captured by 3 am 19 September. Thereafter, B squadron 18 Cavalry moved south from Tilakpur towards Milestone 8 on road Chaprar-Sialkot. They ran straight into the well-prepared defences of D company 2 Baloch. After losing six tanks, the squadron withdrew. On 20 September, 52 Mountain Brigade attacked D company 9 Baloch and captured Kanpur and Palaura Wada.[166] It prompted immediate response from 15 Division. 4 Baloch less a company from 54 Brigade was immediately moved north to counter attack Kanpur and Palaura Wada. 4 Baloch was reinforced by two companies of 7 Engineers and A squadron of 31 TDU. H hour was 6 pm on 20 September. Artillery fired an hour-long fire plan by four field batteries, one medium regiment and a mortar battery. The enemy fled in panic when its position came under such heavy fire. The objectives of village Kanpur and Paraura Wada were secured by 11:50 pm. At 9 am, 21 September, the counter attacking troops were placed under command 104 Brigade. On GHQ orders, Gen Tikka Khan, told 104 Brigade to recapture BM 879 and Muhadipur. B Company 9 Baloch and B Company of 14 Baloch were tasked to capture BM 879 and Muhadipur respectively. A squadron 31 TDU reinforced by troops of C squadron 20 Lancers was to support the attack. H hour was 2 am, 22 September. It was later changed to 4 am. The attack went in at 4:15 am. Indian artillery opened up on the

attacking troops as soon as they discovered the attack. The enemy protective minefield broke the formation of the attacking troops. Due to break down of communications, A squadron 31 TDU could not move up to the objective. The disorganised troops fell back after first light on 22 September after suffering many casualties. Ceasefire became effective on 23 September.

BATTLES OF CHAWINDA SECTOR

Indian 1 Corps had tasked 6 Mountain Division and 14 Infantry Division to establish a bridgehead across Working Boundary during night 7-8 September and 1 Armoured Division to breakout from this bridgehead at first light 8 September. 6 Mountain Division was tasked to capture road junction areas at Maharajke and Charwa. It was to accomplish this task with two integral brigades i.e., 69 and 99 Mountain Brigades and 35 Brigade from 14 Division. 14 Division with only 58 Brigade under command was tasked to capture Nakhnal. 14 Division got late and could not participate in bridgehead operation. 6 Mountain Division tasked 69 Mountain Brigade with A squadron 62 Cavalry to capture Maharajke and 99 Mountain Brigade to capture Charwa. H hour was 2315 hours while preparatory bombardment was to start at 2215 hours. Artillery Brigades of 6 Mountain division, 1 Armoured Division and Artillery Indian 1 Corps were supporting the attack.

As it would be recalled, from the account of battle of Jassar, that on 7 September at 7 pm, HQ 24 Brigade, the whole of 25 Cavalry, 2 Punjab and A company 3 FF were moved to Jassar. Troops left to defend Maharajke-Charwa to Chawinda approach consisted of 3 FF less a company, B Company 13 FF deployed in detachments and platoons along Working Boundary and D Company 2 Punjab deployed in platoon strength at Gangial-Parel-Baghiari. 15 Division had left only five companies in Chawinda sector where the whole might of Indian 1 Corps was unleashed.[167]

As planned, Indian artillery started its hour-long preparatory bombardment at 10:15 pm 7 September against forward two

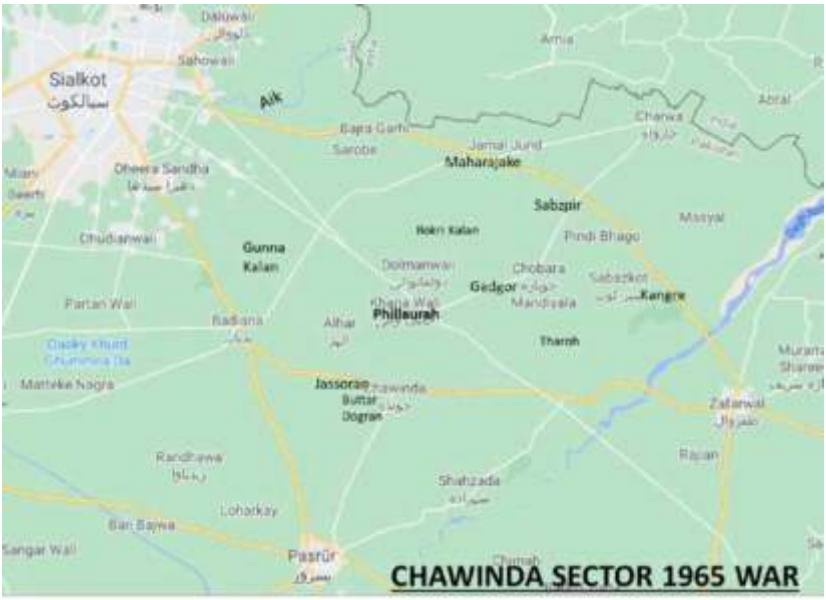
companies of 3 FF and detachments of 13 FF (R&S). Elements of 69 and 99 Mountain Brigades crossed their start lines at 11:15 pm. Almost all the platoons and detachments of 13 FF (R &S) prematurely withdrew, offering little resistance to the Indians. Soon the leading infantry of the two attacking brigades was in contact with B and C companies of 3 FF at Maharajke and Bini Salehrian respectively. "The men of B and C companies of 3 FF stuck to their positions and served their weapons until they ran out of ammunition. The artillery support available could not be made use of effectively due to poor communication."[168] They fought bravely against heavy odds and inflicted and suffered many casualties. Against overwhelming enemy strength, 3 FF was ordered to withdraw to Chawinda. By 6 am 8 September, elements of 3 FF started reaching Chawinda. D Company 2 Punjab deployed at Gangial, Parel and Baghiari saw the battle unfolding on its left flank on night 7-8 September. They were spared Indian artillery fire or infantry assault but realised that they were being bypassed by the enemy on their left flank. "At 1 am, they were instructed to withdraw to Chawinda. D Company marched back through Musial and Kangre and reached Shadipur around 10 am 8 September."[169] 6 Mountain Division managed to establish two bridgeheads at Maharajke and Charwa with little difficulty within planned time. It was now the task of Indian 1 Armoured Division to build in and break out at first light on 8th September. 1 Armoured Division comprised five armour regiments, one motorised infantry battalion and three lorry borne infantry battalions. These units were grouped under 1 Armoured Brigade and 43 Lorried Brigade. 1 Armoured Brigade comprised 16 Cavalry, 17 Poona Horse and two infantry battalions organised in two groups of an armour regiment and an infantry battalion each.

17 Poona Horse group was tasked to advance along Baghiari-Sabz kot-Tharoh axis. 16 Cavalry group was tasked to advance astride axis Parel- Chobara-Gadgor-Phillaurah. 43 Lorried Brigade; consisting of 2 Lancers, 62 Cavalry less one squadron and two infantry battalions was tasked to advance along route

Dewli Salehriyan-Saidanwali-Sabzpir crossroad-Mastpur-Salowal- Bhagowal. C squadron 62 Cavalry was to guard the eastern flank of 1 Armoured Division by moving east of 17 Horse group along eastern bank of Degh Nadi. 1 Armoured Division's H hour was 6 am on 8th September.

Around midnight 7-8 September, units of 1 Armoured Division started moving towards the bridgehead established by 6 Mountain Division. During the night, a light rain had ruined the track allotted to 43 Lorried Brigade. As more and more tanks bogged down in soft mud, Commander 43 Lorried Brigade requested Division Headquarters for permission to use the routes being used by 1 Armoured Brigade. He was told to wait till the tail of 1 Armoured Brigade had cleared the route. 43 Lorried Brigade therefore got delayed and crossed into Pakistan around 11 am on 8 September. C Squadron 62 Cavalry tasked to protect eastern flank also got late. The two armoured regimental groups of 1 Armoured brigade broke out at 6 am on 8th September with both of their flanks exposed.[170]

At 2 am 8 September, 15 Division realised its folly of having displaced 24 Brigade at the most inappropriate time. 24 Brigade and Artillery 4 Corps were ordered to immediately turn back and reach Pasrur. Journey back to Pasrur was chaotic as only one road was available. Awake though out the night and tired, 24 Brigade reached Pasrur at 5 am on 8th September. After gathering information that Indians had attacked in strength and were advancing with armour, Commander 24 Brigade, Brig Abdul Ali Malik ordered 25 Cavalry and 2 Punjab at 6 am "to advance to Chawinda and stabilise the situation".[171] Commanding Officer 25 Cavalry, Lt Col Nisar Ahmed ordered B Squadron at 6:30 am to advance north and contact enemy somewhere near Phillaurah. B squadron reached Phillaurah and deployed astride the crossroads facing Chobara. A squadron moved on road Chawinda-Dugrai and deployed along road Phillaurah -Dugrai from Dauloke to Dugrai.



Map 13.
Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

At 7:45 am, 17 Horse reached Musial and 16 Cavalry was near Chobara. Between 8:30 and 9 am, 16 Cavalry after crossing Gadgor came face to face with B squadron 25 Cavalry deployed with two troops left of the road and one troop right of it. A tank versus tank battle started. Indians were surprised at sudden appearance of strong armour opposition. Looking for cover, they moved rearwards. B squadron Commander, Maj Ahmed, ordered his troops to follow the retreating enemy back to Gadgor.[172] While the leading squadron of 16 Cavalry was being pushed back to Gadgor, another squadron of this unit moved southeast to outflank Pakistani armour operating at Phillaurah. This squadron of 16 Cavalry ran into A squadron of 25 Cavalry. In a short firefight, 16 Cavalry lost four tanks and destroyed one of 25 Cavalry. In these engagements, 16 Cavalry lost a total of 16 tanks against 4 of 25

Cavalry. Among the casualties were two artillery observers with 16 Cavalry, one each from 71 Medium Regiment and 2 (SP) Field Regiment affecting availability of artillery support at critical stage of the battle.[173]

17 Poona Horse was advancing east of 16 Cavalry. At 9 am they ran into D Company 2 Punjab in village Shadipur. The company was withdrawing south ward. After routing this company, they contacted A squadron of 25 Cavalry south of Tharoh at about 10:30 am. The rear elements of 17 Poona Horse started manoeuvring to their west. It would be remembered that at this time, 16 Cavalry was developing its manoeuvre to its east. Both the Indian units manoeuvring inward mistook each other for enemy and destroyed each other's tanks before the situation was clear.[174] At 10:50 am, once the two armour regimental groups of 1 Armoured Brigade had been checked by 25 Cavalry, GOC 1 Armoured Division released 4 Hudson Horse to 1 Armoured Brigade. Around 11:30 am, after blunting the advance of two Indian armour regiments, CO 25 Cavalry launched C squadron from the west to cut-off road Gadgor-Chobara. Commander 1 Indian Armoured Brigade moved 4 Hudson Horse to help 16 Cavalry and check the threat posed by C squadron of 25 Cavalry. C squadron was opposed by two Indian armour regiments and thus could not make any headway. By 12 pm, HQ 24 Brigade moved forward and established itself in a rest house near Phillaurah crossroads. 2 Punjab had reoccupied its defensive positions north and northeast of Chawinda. On the request of Commander 24 Brigade, HQ 15 Division released 14 Baloch less a company. The Balochis reached Kalewali at 2 pm on 8 September. By mid-day 3 FF had also reassembled at Chawinda.

At about 11 am, HQ 15 Division ordered 13 FF to seal off the routes of enemy (16 Cavalry) withdrawing under pressure of 25 Cavalry. Two R&S platoons were ordered to advance along route Zafarwal-Maharajke and cut-off the enemy withdrawal route at Sabzpir crossroads. Near Kangre the two platoons came across Indian 71 Medium Regiment preparing to deploy at approximately

3:30 pm. The two platoons surprised the Indian gunners. They opened up with their recoilless rifles and other automatics. Four tracked towers, one gun and many ammunition vehicles were destroyed apart from damage to four guns. The position and the guns were abandoned by the Indian gunners as a result. This attack by two R&S platoons was reported to HQ 1 Indian Armoured Brigade as an attack by Pakistani armour. To counter this new "armour" threat developing on his left flank, Commander 1 Armoured Brigade ordered 17 Poona Horse to immediately withdraw to village Pindi Bhago and protect the left flank of the brigade.[175] The withdrawal of 17 Poona Horse became a disorganised affair and was further compounded when it reached near Sabzpir and mistook the tanks of 2 Lancers leading the advance of 43 Lorried Brigade as Pakistani tanks. After a few tank casualties the confusion was sorted out by intervention of senior HQ.[176]

At 5 pm, C squadron 25 Cavalry and A company 2 Punjab were launched to dislodge the enemy from Gadgor. 4 Hudson Horse withdrew to Kotli Dhudian. 16 Cavalry withdrew east of Hasri Nala abandoning eight tanks in running condition. Gadgor was captured by the attacking troops.[177]

At nightfall on 8th September, 16 Cavalry lay along Hasri Nala, 17 Poona Horse at Pindi Bhago and Sabzpir and 4 Horse at Kotli Dhudian, 2 Lancers was at Nakwal with 43 Lorried Brigade north of it.[178] The assessment of Indian 1 Armoured Division was that two Pakistani armour regiments were opposing it in the area Phillaurah and there were some armour elements at Zafarwal. While 24 Brigade still did not know that it was fighting against the might of Indian 1 Corps. The ferocity of attacks by 25 Cavalry on 8 September sent Indian 1 Armoured Division into a shock. For next two days i.e., 9th and 10th September, it remained on the defensive, reorganising and contemplating its next moves.

On 9 September, on Indian side, 35 Infantry Brigade was taken away from 6 Mountain Division and tasked to establish a firm base

in area Sabzpir crossroads. 116 Infantry Brigade of 14 Infantry Division was moved forward to Nakhnal. During night of 9-10 September, both the brigades were placed under command 1 Armoured Division and 43 Lorried Brigade was ordered to establish a firm base in area Kaloi. On Pakistan side, oblivious of the enemy strength, Commander 24 Brigade ordered 2 Punjab to clear Chobara with one integral company, one company from 14 Baloch and a squadron of 25 Cavalry. 3 FF was tasked to clear Rorki Kalan and Saidanwala and patrol area in the north to gain contact with the enemy. The advance commenced at 8 am on 9th September. 3 FF occupied Rurki Kalan and Saidanwala without any opposition. Advance by 2 Punjab group met heavy resistance as their objective was held by two Indian armour regiments and was therefore aborted. Meanwhile during the search of tanks of Indian 16 Cavalry abandoned on 8 September, a copy of written operations orders was found. The document revealed the presence of Indian 1 Armoured Division in the area. The document was sent to HQ 15 Division which informed HQ 1 Corps (Pakistani) at 10:10 am on 9th September. At 5 pm, Indians launched a strong counter attack at Gadgor. It was beaten back by concentrated fire of automatics, tanks and artillery.

At 11 pm 9 September, Pakistan's Corps HQ realising the gravity of the situation due to the presence of Indian l Armoured Division, ordered 6 Armoured Division to assume operational responsibility of area between Aik Nala and Degh Nadi.[179]

6 Armoured Division comprised of three armour regiments, two motorised infantry battalions, one self-propelled artillery regiment and a battalion each of sappers, signals, supply, medical and mechanical engineers. It lacked armoured brigade headquarter, divisional artillery headquarters and a Colonel Staff in divisional headquarters. 6 Armoured Division had moved to Pasrur from Gujranwala on night 6-7 September. At 8 pm, on 8th September, 6 Armoured Division was tasked "to be prepared to destroy enemy penetration in area east of MRL canal."[180] GOC 6 Armoured Division expecting that Indians could either move

towards Wazirabad, Pasrur or Narowal, placed his troops to guard all three approaches. 10 Cavalry (Guides) was positioned from Badiana northwest towards Sialkot;[181] 11 Cavalry was placed at Pasrur, 9 FF was deployed from Phillaurah to Degh Nadi with one platoon at Zafarwal, 22 Cavalry and 14 FF remained in their assembly areas west of Badiana. All units reached their positions by first light 9 September. At 9 pm, 14 Para Brigade was placed under Command 6 Armoured Division. It comprised of 1 Punjab and one company of 8 Punjab. At 11 pm, 9 September, 6 Armoured Division was given the operational responsibility of area between Aik Nala to Degh Nadi with 24 Brigade under its command.[182]

Gen Abrar, the GOC of 6 Armoured Division ordered 24 Brigade with 25 Cavalry remaining under its command to continue defending Gadgor positions. 2 Punjab with four companies was at Gadgor and 14 Baloch with two companies was defending Phillaurah crossroads. 14 Para Brigade was moved to Pasrur, where 4 FF was placed under its command. Artillery 4 Corps was assigned the role of HQ Artillery 6 Armoured Division. Bulk of artillery was deployed north and south of Chawinda.

Indian GOC of 1 Armoured Division ordered 1 Armoured Brigade to depict a feint attack on Gadgor from the direction of Chobara on 10th September in order to mislead Pakistani defenders about the direction of actual attack. Then move 1 Armoured Brigade on night 10-11 September to Rorki Kalan and launch main attack on Phillaurah crossroads from the direction of northwest at first light 11 September. 43 Lorried Brigade with two infantry battalion was to establish a firm base at Rorki Kalan by 10 pm on night 10-11 September. 1 Artillery Brigade was deployed west of Sabzpir to provide fire support. 35 Infantry Brigade and 69 Mountain Brigade were to remain at Sabzpir and Maharajke respectively. 99 Mountain Brigade was to move to Kaloi and go under command 1 Armoured Division at 5:30 am on 11 September. 1 Armoured Brigade was tasked to advance towards Phillaurah at first light on 11 September with all three

armour regiments. 16 Cavalry and 17 Poona Horse objectives were Khakanwali and Libbe respectively. 4 Hudson Horse was to cut road Phillaurah- Chobara at Saboki.[183] Thereafter 17 and 4 Horse were to encircle Phillaurah from both sides and destroy Pakistani armour trapped in Phillaurah- Gadgor area.

At 9 am on 10th September, Indian feint attack started developing against Gadgor from Chobara side. Anticipating such an attack, Commander 24 Brigade had moved 25 Cavalry to its defensive positions early in the morning 10 September. As per battle account of 24 Brigade, "A fierce battle took place. Our infantry and armour displayed a rare example of courage and fortitude. Artillery was most active and played havoc with the enemy. By 10:30 am, the attack was repulsed."[184]

At 11 am, GOC 6 Armoured Division was called to HQ 1 Corps to discuss a new deployment plan proposed by Lt Gen Sahibzada Yaqub Khan. The Gen had been appointed as advisor to Commander 1 Corps on armour matters. He had proposed 14 Para Brigade to be moved to Zafarwal. 11 Cavalry and 9 FF to replace 24 Brigade at Phillaurah-Gadgor. 24 Brigade along with 25 Cavalry to move to Pasrur. Despite serious reservations of Maj Gen Abrar the GOC 6 Armoured Division, and later of Brig Abdul Ali Malik about relief of 24 Brigade and 25 Cavalry from Phillaurah-Gadgor, orders were issued to implement the redeployment of 6 Armoured Division on night 10-11 September. 24 Brigade started pulling out at 11:30 pm. 11 Cavalry ordered its squadrons to be in their new positions by 4 am on 11 September. 9 FF had deployed by 2 am the same day. 11 Cavalry was placed under 9 FF with Commanding Officer of 9 FF as commander of the two units.

While relief of Phillaurah- Gadgor was under way, two brigades of Indian 1 Armoured Division started moving to Rorki-Kalan. To drown the noise of moving tanks, Indian artillery opened up on Gadgor positions at around 3:10 am held by newly arrived troops of 9 FF. The final orders for attack were delivered

by Indian 1 Armoured Brigade Commander at Rurki Kalan at 1 am, 11 September.

1 Armoured Brigade commenced its advance from the firm base of Rorki Kalan as per plan. 43 Lorried Brigade led by 5 Jat followed the armoured brigade at 6:45 am. At 7 am both the brigades were engaged by PAF. After the air strike, Pakistan artillery started engaging 5 Jat near Chak Ali, inflicting many casualties. 16 Cavalry captured Khakanwali at about 8 am. A little after 7 am, C company 9 FF deployed at 40 r, started engaging Indian tanks moving at considerable distance on the left and heading for Saboki. This was A squadron of 4 Hudson Horse. At this time, A squadron of 11 Cavalry, moving up to join C company of 9 FF, observed the tanks of 4 Hudson Horse. Tanks of both sides opened up at each other, resultantly a portion of A company 9 FF was trapped in between. A squadron of 11 Cavalry claimed three Indian tanks and lost four of their own.[185]

The full weight of 4 Hudson Horse and 17 Poona Horse was directed at Phillaurah area held by 11 Cavalry less its A squadron which had moved to Gadgor to reinforce 9 FF. At about 8 am, C squadron equipped with M36 B2 tank busters reported contact with Indian Centurions at Wachoke. ln next 15 minutes, C squadron destroyed three enemy tanks and lost four of its own. CO 11 Cavalry moved B squadron between Libbe and Phillaurah crossroads just when 43 Lorried Brigade was preparing to launch its attack. 43 Lorried Brigade attacked with both the battalions up. (5/9 Gurkha and 5 Jats) They were hit by PAF and tank fire. The attack was finally beaten back. Oblivious of the fact that they were facing two Indian armour units, B squadron 11 Cavalry destroyed five enemy tanks including two tanks of Commanding Officers of 17 Poona Horse and 4 Hudson Horse.[186] B squadron lost three tanks in this engagement. Just when Indian onslaught seemed to be wavering, disaster struck RHQ of 11 Cavalry. At Phillaurah crossroads, Commanding Officers of 11 Cavalry and 1 (SP) Field Regiment were standing together coordinating the battle. One of

the enemy artillery shells landed near them. Lt Col Abdul Rahman was killed on the spot while Lt Col Abdul Aziz and Maj Muzaffar Malik the CO and 21C of 11 Cavalry were seriously injured. The command vehicle of the unit was destroyed and communications were disrupted. By now nine out of eleven tanks of C squadron had been destroyed while the remaining two were loaded with injured and sent back to Chawinda. A and B squadrons had also lost a total of seven tanks. Heavy pressure by Indian two armour and infantry battalions, many tank casualties and loss of command and control due to serious injuries to the CO and 21C forced A and B squadrons to withdraw through Kalewali by 12 pm. 9 FF, at Gadgor, was therefore cut off due to loss of Phillaurah. A company of 9 FF had scattered in the morning once it was overrun by 4 Hudson Horse. Battalion HQ with B and C companies held on to their positions around Gadgor. At 10:45 am, HQ 6 Armoured Division decided to launch 10 Guides Cavalry against western flank of Indian penetration at Phillaurah to relieve pressure on 11 Cavalry and 9 FF.[187] A and B squadrons of Guides Cavalry were tasked to attack Chhar and Libbe respectively. C squadron was ordered to move to Kot Izzat. The attack by Guides Cavalry started at 1130 hours on 11th September. A squadron after severe fighting pushed back Indian 16 Cavalry and captured Chhar by 4 pm. In the process, the squadron commander was injured. A squadron found five enemy Centurion tanks abandoned. B squadron ran into 17 Poona Horse and elements of 43 Lorried Brigade in the area of Gil and Khananwali. Squadron Commander Maj Abbasi and his second-in-command Lt Hussain Shah were both killed south of Gil. Around this time information was received that Indian armour was moving from Bajaragarhi to Bhagowal. It was 62 Cavalry and 8 Garhwal rifles.[188] A and B squadrons immediately headed for Bhagowal. Sudden appearance of Guides Cavalry east of Bhagowal forced 62 Cavalry to withdraw to Kaloi after losing five tanks. CO Guides Cavalry then rallied his two squadrons in the area south of Bhagowal at 4:30 pm.

After ordering Guides Cavalry to launch the attack, as already

explained, HQ 6 Armoured Division ordered 25 Cavalry to move to Chawinda. 14 FF and later 24 Brigade were also moved to Chawinda to defend it against the Indian threat. 14 Para Brigade was moved from Zafarwal to Pasrur.

At 3:30 pm, 25 Cavalry was ordered to clear Phillaurah and extricate 9 FF. C squadron led the advance. They met tanks of 4 Hudson Horse south of Phillaurah. Phillaurah crossroads was held by 5 Jat of 43 Lorried Brigade and a squadron of 4 Hudson Horse. Unable to clear the area, 25 Cavalry told 9 FF to pull out.[189] Consequently, 9 FF collected all their troops at Gadgor. The injured were put in vehicles while foot columns marched on either side of the road. The move started at 8:10 pm. At Phillaurah crossroads they were challenged by the troops of 5 Jat. 9 FF troops fired back. A few vehicles rushed through the fire and headed for Chawinda. The men of 9 FF broke into small parties and made good their escape. They kept trickling into Chawinda during the night. The battalion was ordered to reassemble at Pasrur.[190]

11 September proved disastrous for Pakistan. On this day, India lost 11 tanks against twenty-three of Pakistan in Sialkot sector. Pakistan had to give up its strategic offensive in Khem Karan and divert 1 Armoured Division less an armoured brigade to Sialkot sector.

After capturing Phillaurah, Indian 1 Armoured Division took two days operational pause for regrouping. It greatly helped 6 Armoured Division to regain balance. Commander 24 Brigade gave deployment orders to his battalion commanders at 10 pm, 11 September. 14 Baloch reached Chawinda at 11:30 pm, followed by 3 FF at 1 am and 2 Punjab around 3 am. 25 Cavalry leaguered near Chawinda railway station. Guides Cavalry now reduced to two squadrons had one squadron at Rakh Baba Bureshah and the other west of Jassaron. HQ 14 Para brigade reached Pasrur around 3 am. On the Indian side, 43 Lorried Brigade was relieved by 99 Mountain Brigade at Phillaurah.

The area of Zafarwal had been given low priority by HQ 15

Division. Battalion HQ of 13 FF had moved to Sialkot on 9 September, leaving the area to be surveilled by airborne observers only. On 11 September, 14 Indian Division ordered 116 Brigade to establish a base at Zafarwal on night 11-12 September. It tasked 5/5 Gurkha Rifles to accomplish the task. This unit sent one of its companies to Zafarwal at 9:30 pm on 11 September.[191] Gurkhas reached Zafarwal late at night and started digging south of the town.

On 9 September, Pakistani 115 Brigade placed A company 13 FF (R&S) with one platoon under Maj Ijaz Ahmed at Dhamtal. At 7:30 am, 12 September, Maj Ijaz was told by the civilians displaced by the battles in that area about presence of Gurkhas south of Zafarwal. He informed HQ 115 Brigade, who sent him reconnaissance troop of 33 TDU. Maj Ijaz divided the available troops into three groups' i.e., recoilless rifle group, machine gun group and light machine gun group. The recoilless rifle group advanced on the road and the other two groups under Capt. Naseer (Retired as Maj Gen) advanced east of the road to attack the enemy from the flank and rear. Gurkhas were surprised when attacked from the front and eastern flank. After a short fire fight the Indians withdrew north of Zafarwal leaving behind eighteen dead. Pakistani losses were one dead and four injured. Maj Ijaz and a troop of 33 TDU then pursued the enemy and pushed them to the western side of Degh Nadi. At 2 pm, 12 September, an air borne observer reported concentration of many tanks and infantry near Sabzpir. On orders of HQ 6 Armoured Division, 14 Para Brigade sent 4 FF and a company of 8 Punjab to defend Zafarwal. A squadron each of 22 Cavalry and 33 TDU was placed at Pasrur and Qila Sobha Singh respectively. 4 FF occupied Zafarwal by 1 am, 13 September. By morning, Zafarwal was being defended by 4 FF, company 8 Punjab and squadron 22 Cavalry. First Indian attack, which materialized at 6:30 am on 13th September, was beaten back by the combined fire of tanks and artillery. A full-fledged brigade attack by Indian 116 Brigade supported by one squadron of 2 Lancers was launched at around 11:30 am. "Amid

the concentrated fire of artillery and the battalion's mortars, the enemy infantry failed to follow their tanks. After losing one tank, rest of the squadron withdrew west of Degh Nadi."[192] The enemy made no further attempts to capture Zafarwal. On 18th September, 10 Brigade assumed command of all troops at Zafarwal. Simultaneously, 8 Division took over operational responsibility of all areas east of Degh Nadi with 10 and 115 Brigades under its command.

On Chawinda front, thirteen mechanically fit M48 tanks of 11 Cavalry were formed into one squadron and placed under Guides Cavalry as its C squadron. All M 36 B2 tanks of Guides Cavalry were organised into one troop and employed for the defence of guns of Artillery 4 Corps. 3 and 4 Armoured Brigades of 1 Armoured Division reached Chawinda sector on 12 September. 3 Armoured Brigade comprised 19 Lancers and 16 (SP) Field Regiment while 4 Armoured Brigade consisted of 5 Horse, 1 FF and 15 (SP) Field Regiment. HQ 1 Armoured Division reached Daska on 13 September.[193] 19 Lancers was inducted into battle on 13 September under HQ 6 Armoured Division.

On 12 September, Indian 69 Mountain Brigade with 62 Cavalry was tasked to capture Bhagowal. The advance commenced at 4 am on 13 September and the objective was secured unopposed by 6 am. On Pakistani side Guides Cavalry, A and B squadrons were deployed along railway line from level crossing to Alhar. 22 Cavalry's B and C squadrons were deployed from Gunna Kalan to the level crossing. At about 8 am on 13 September, both the units noticed tanks of 62 Cavalry advancing south of Bhagowal. Within minutes, enemy infantry and tanks were engaged with artillery fire."[194] According to Lt Gen Harbaksh Singh, the brigade sector was engaged by heavy artillery fire directed by two Air observation posts. Approximately 1000 shells rained into the brigade sector within a space of two hours resulting in heavy casualties.[195]

On 13 September, HQ 6 Armoured Division created an adhoc

HQ called Wajahat task force. Guides Cavalry, 22 Cavalry and 14 FF were placed under this force. The force was tasked to hold area between 24 Brigade and eastern boundary of 15 Division.[196]

On 13 September, Indian 1 Armoured Division issued orders for capture of Chawinda, on 14 September. 4 Horse was tasked to commence advance at 6 am, 14 September from Chhar to Fatehpur and then cut road Pasrur-Badiana at Buttar with one squadron and rest of the regiment was to move southeast to Sarangpur to cut road Pasrur-Chawinda. At 7 am, 17 Horse was to advance to Wazirwali and support the attack of 43 Lorried Brigade for the capture of Chawinda.

On 14 September, 6 Armoured Division was deployed in four main groups. Three infantry heavy groups were holding Chawinda, Pasrur and Zafarwal. The fourth group i.e., Wajahat force was between Chawinda and 15 Division.[197] 24 Brigade at Chawinda comprised of 14 Baloch, 2 Punjab, 3 FF, 25 Cavalry and A squadron of 33 TDU and 14 Para Brigade at Pasrur consisted of 9 FF and 1 Punjab. Composition of troops at Zafarwal and with Wajahat Force has already been given.

Artillery 4 Corps was deployed immediately south of Chawinda barely a thousand yards from the infantry positions. Keeping in view the direction of the Indian attack, Artillery 4 Corps could not have been better deployed although Guides Cavalry and 22 Cavalry had to be supported at extreme ranges.

Starting from south of Chhar, 4 Horse commenced their advance at 6 am, 14 September. After meeting some resistance from Guides Cavalry in Jallowali area, 4 Horse captured Alhar at 2 pm. Instead of moving further south, 4 Horse took up positions along the railway line thus once again giving time to Pakistan armour to regain balance. At this position, 4 Horse were engaged by heavy shelling by Pakistan artillery and three air strikes by PAF. 17 Poona Horse started off from Libbe at 12 pm to capture Wazirwali and Kalewali as a preparatory move to the main assault by 43 Lorried Brigade to capture Chawinda. When they neared

Wazirwali and Kalewali at 1 pm, they were engaged by Artillery 4 Corps. They did not venture beyond these villages.

D Company 3 FF deployed around Janewal started wavering due to presence of 17 Horse on their right flank.[198] A troop of 33 TDU was dispatched to support D company 3 FF. A fire fight developed between tanks of troop 33 TDU and Indian tanks. After tank losses on both sides, D and B companies of 3 FF were adjusted to make them more compact. B and C squadrons of Guides Cavalry were moved to Jassoran and Mundeke Berian respectively. They came under heavy shelling by Indian artillery. Indians broke off engagement around 6 pm. On 14 September, 6 Armoured Division lost four tanks and destroyed eleven of the Indians.[199] On this day, apart from Artillery 4 Corps, PAF also played a decisive role to beat back Indian attacks. Throughout the day, Indian tank columns, gun positions and depth echelons came under severe punishment at the hands of the Pakistani pilots.

43 Lorried Brigade was tasked to establish a firm base between Phillaurah and Alhar on 15 September. To do it, they decided to clear area up to Hasri Nala running north of Chawinda. First attack was launched at 6 am on 14 Baloch which was repulsed by tank and artillery fire. Second attack came at 8 am aimed at area between Jassoran and Chawinda. It was also beaten back by tank and artillery fire. At about 1:30 pm, 8 Garhwal Rifles and 20 Rajput were employed to capture area up to Hasri Nala. The Rajputs and Garhwalis dismounted from their transport and began to form up south of Wazirwali in broad day light under direct observation of a Pakistani artillery observer. Air burst shells from three Pakistani artillery units caught the enemy in the open.[200] Artillery 4 Corps inflicted twenty casualties on Rajputs and twenty-seven on Garhwalis. The attack failed at forming up stage.

On 15 September, Indian 1 Armoured Brigade tasked 16 Cavalry to capture area up to railway line along the Bhagowal-Badiana track. C squadron 22 Cavalry was defending the area. 16 Cavalry lost four tanks to the defending armour. Indian 16 Cavalry

finally disengaged itself and went back east of Hasri Nala where it was strafed by PAF between 6:30 and 6:50 pm.[201] "The total tank casualties on 15 September amounted to five against fourteen of the enemy."[202] On night 15 September, 14 Para Brigade was made responsible for the defence of Badiana. It was already responsible for the defence of Pasrur and Zafarwal. Accordingly, 1 Punjab was moved from Pasrur to Badiana and 1 FF from Mundeke to Pasrur.

On 15 September, Indian 1 Corps issued orders for offensive on 16 September. Indian Armoured Division was ordered to advance west of 24 Brigade defences and cut the road Chawinda-Pasrur southeast of Butur Dograndi to facilitate the capture of Chawinda by 6 Mountain Division. To achieve it, 1 Armoured Brigade planned its operation in two phases. In phase 1, 4 Horse was to capture Fatehpur- Sodreke and 17 Horse was tasked to secure Jassoran. In phase 2, 17 Horse and 8 Garhwal Rifles were to capture Butur Dograndi and cut-off road Chawinda-Pasrur.[203] The two-pronged attack of 1 Armoured Brigade began at dawn on 16 September with massive artillery fire mainly at Chawinda. At first light, 4 and 17 Horse crossed the railway line. Guides Cavalry repulsed the first two attacks but the third one forced it to withdraw south of road Badiana- Chawinda. In 24 Brigade area, full weight of attack by B squadron 17 Horse and B company 9 Dogra fell on D company 3 FF which was deployed between Jassoran and the railway line. Under heavy pressure, 3 FF's D and B companies withdrew and by 9:30 am Jassoran was captured by B Company 9 Dogra. 8 Garhwal Rifles reached Jassoran at about 11:30 am and commenced their advance towards Butur Dograndi at 12:30 pm. They had hardly covered three furlongs when their CO was fatally wounded by Pakistan artillery and small arms fire and their advance was temporarily halted. After some time, the advance resumed but they continued to suffer considerably at the hands of Pakistani artillery as their move was under direct observation of Pakistani observation posts at Chawinda. Despite all odds against them, the Garhwalis captured a portion of Butur

Dograndi.[204] C squadron and later A squadron of 17 Horse joined the Garhwal Rifles at Butur Dograndi. At 3 pm1, RHQ of 17 House also joined the two squadrons. With the fall of Butur Dograndi, rest of the elements of 3 FF withdrew into the gun areas in the south. Now between Indians and guns of Artillery 4 Corps, only a depleted C squadron of 25 Cavalry and a few tanks of 33 TDU strung in a thin line along the road and the railway line. Massed fire by Artillery 4 Corps halted the enemy. At this stage a vigorous counterattack at Butur Dograndi by C squadron 25 Cavalry forced 17 Horse and 8 Garhwal Rifles to withdraw to Jassoran and Janewal where they reached by 4:15 pm.[205]

On the Badiana front, Guides Cavalry having suffered considerable attrition at the hands of 4 Horse was pulled out of the battle. This brought 19 Lancers in contact with 4 Horse which was deployed along road Badiana-Chawinda. 19 Lancers attacked Sangatpur and Sodreke with two squadrons. Being static, 4 Horse took a heavy toll of the attacking 19 Lancers.[206] Both sides disengaged after sunset. After blunting the attack of 19 Lancers, Indians renewed their efforts to capture Butur Dograndi. One squadron each of 4 and 17 Horse supported by 8 Garhwal Rifles launched another attack and recaptured Butur Dograndi by 6 pm. They were now shooting everything that moved on road Pasrur-Chawinda. CO 25 Cavalry reinforced his C squadron with additional tanks to fight the attacking enemy. Combined effect of massed fire of Artillery 4 Corps and attack by squadron 25 Cavalry was devastating for the enemy. CO 17 Horse was caught outside his tank by Pakistan artillery and mortally wounded. At nightfall the remnants of two Indian armour squadrons limped back to Jassoran leaving 8 Garhwal Rifles to fend for itself. Garhwal Rifles prepared their defences and spent the second night is succession without food. 24 Brigade in the mean while readjusted their defences at Chawinda, to cover the gaps left by withdrawal of 3 FF.

In the morning of 17 September, 24 Brigade resumed attack to

recapture Butur Dograndi. C company of 3 FF and one troop of 25 Cavalry counter attacked and captured the eastern side of the village. Around 11 am, an attack by A company 3 FF launched to capture remaining half of the village did not succeed. Later both the companies were pulled back to engage the enemy with artillery. Eighty-four guns of all calibres belonging to Artillery 4 Corps pounded Butur Dograndi. In the afternoon, one troop of 17 Horse managed to reach Garhwalis. They were virtually cut off, without food and without heavy infantry weapons or ammunition. Indian commanders were left with no choice but to order decimated Garhwalis to withdraw. Between 2:30 and 3 pm, when Pakistani artillery fire slackened a bit, the Garhwal Rifles and the troop of tanks carrying the wounded, withdrew from Butur Dograndi under cover of Indian artillery fire.[207] This was the farthest extent the Indian army ever reached in Chawinda sector in 1965 War. By sundown on 17 September, neither 1 Armoured Brigade nor 43 Lorried Brigade were capable of mounting even a limited attack anymore.

4 Armoured Brigade comprising 19 Lancers, 22 Cavalry, 14 FF and 15 (SP) Field Regiment replaced WAJAHAT Force and was placed under command 6 Armoured Division. At 8:30 pm, GOC 6 Armoured Division issued orders for limited offensive on 18 September to clear the enemy salient between Badiana and Chawinda. As per division plan, C Company 3 FF walked into a deserted Butur Dograndi at 6 am on 18 September. 14 Para Brigade moved to Badiana after being relieved by 10 Brigade at Pasrur on night 17-18 September. On orders of 14 Para Brigade, 1 Punjab supported by a squadron of 22 Cavalry, captured area up to eastern edge of Rakh Baba Bhureshah without any opposition. B squadron of 19 Lancers and A company of 1 Punjab captured Sodreke. B squadron of 19 Lancers attacked Jassoran at 3 pm. Jassoran and Janewal were captured by 5:30 pm. Two companies of 20 Baloch were tasked to capture Lalewali and Bheloke. H hour was 4:30 pm. Both the objectives were captured as planned.

Around midday on 18 September, GHQ placed 8 Division

under 1 Corps. 8 Division was assigned operational responsibility of the area from Raya Khas on the right to Chawinda defences up to Jassoran. Troops given under command were 24 Brigade including 25 Cavalry, 10 Brigade, 115 Brigade and 12 Cavalry less a squadron. Maj Gen Nasir was made GOC of 8 Division while Maj Gen Sahibzada Yaqub Khan took over the command of 1 Armoured Division.

The last major Indian attack on Chawinda was launched by 6 Mountain Division on night 18-19 September. For this attack, 35, 58 and 99 Mountain Brigades were grouped under 6 Mountain Division. 20 Rajput of 35 Brigade was tasked to capture Jassoran in a preliminary operation. It was to be followed by an attack at 0100 hours by 35 and 58 Brigades simultaneously south and north of the railway line respectively and capture Chawinda by first light 19 September.[208]

At 11 pm on 18 September, 20 Rajput moved out to capture Jassoran which was being defended by A Company of 3 FF. Under pressure, this company withdrew and Jassoran was captured by the Rajputs. Preceded by 80 minutes preparatory bombardment, 6 Mountain Division's main attack began at 1 am.[209] South of the railway line, 35 Brigade attacked with both battalions abreast. The attack fell straight on the defences of 3 FF. Under heavy pressure, B and C companies of 3 FF withdrew in disorder towards gun positions. CO 25 Cavalry, rushed in a troop of tanks to reinforce A squadron deployed southeast of the town up to Naugaza. Once again guns of Artillery 4 Corps became vulnerable. It was the second time that the enemy had been able to reach almost 1500 yards from the guns. The gunners stuck to their position. On the request of GOC 6 Armoured Division, HQ 1 Corps released two companies from 10 Brigade for protection of the gun areas. At 1:30 am, two companies of 6 FF led by Maj Abdullah Saeed took up positions in the area of Mile 4. Some tanks of 12 Cavalry also arrived and were deployed for protection of the guns.

North of the railway line, 58 Brigade also attacked with two

battalions up, 14 Rajput on the left and 4 J&K on the right. The defensive fire of Artillery 4 Corps fell on the right side of 14 Rajput and caused the battalion to veer left and run into 2 Lancers at Wazirwali. It resulted in exchange of fire between the two units. The leading companies of 4 J&K were able to reach the objective but the two follow up companies disintegrated under Artillery 4 Corps fire. In both the brigades, artillery shelling created such confusion that all control at battalion and brigade levels was lost and the formation ceased to be a cohesive force.[210] Around dawn of 19 September, situation began to swing in favour of Pakistan Army. "Firing at their minimum ranges, the guns of Artillery 4 Corps rained shells on the crumbling Indian ranks. And then began the carnage. Caught in this devastating fire from weapons of every calibre, the attacking enemy battalions were all but annihilated. Sunrise on 19 September lit up a battlefield covered with the remains of two Indian brigades; some of the personnel were still suffering the agony before the final death. At least 600 were killed and nearly 100 were taken prisoners."[211] The history of Indian Artillery records, "The attack of 6 Mountain Division failed notwithstanding the numbers of the attaching infantry and the weight of the Corps Artillery supporting fire. An elementary principle was ignored, i.e., it is not enough to neutralise the defenders on the objective without at the same time, rendering impotent the guns supporting the defenders."[212]

Without knowing the fate of 6 Mountain Division attack, 1 Armoured Brigade ordered 4 Horse to capture Jassoran and Sodreke with a squadron each. At first light on 19 September two squadrons of 4 Horse crossed the railway line near Alhar. On Pakistani side, 19 Lancers had deployed a squadron each near Mundeke Berian, Jassoran and Sodereke. 4 Horse moved south in complete ignorance of location of 19 Lancers. Around 7:30 am, 4 Horse lost eight tanks in quick succession and limped back in shock, north of the railway line. At midday on 19 September, GOC 6 Armoured Division issued orders for elimination of a small salient occupied by 6 Mountain Division the previous night. A

company each from 7 and 14 FF supported by a squadron of 19 Lancers was tasked to capture Jassoran. H hour was 5 pm. Jassoran was quickly captured. Squadron 19 Lancers and A company 14 FF captured Janewal by 6 pm.[213]

At 4:30 am on 20 September, 19 Lancers broke leaguer and the squadrons moved to their respective areas of responsibilities. Upon crossing road Badiana-Chawinda at first light, these elements discovered, at a distance of 1000 yards, a tank squadron of 4 Horse breaking leaguer. The leading tanks opened up with all weapons. The Indians were caught by surprise. They abandoned their tanks and retreated leaving behind six tanks. In the morning of 20 September, 6 Armoured Division held the same positions, as it did on 12th September.[214]

Late in the evening of 20 September, GHQ ordered 1 Corps to prepare a plan to evict Indians from the areas captured by them. An operation named WIND UP was prepared to be launched at 4:30 am, 22 September. However, as ceasefire talks were at an advanced stage at UNO, operation WIND UP was postponed.

If the reasons for start of 1965 war are critically analysed the blame rests squarely on the shoulders of India. The conflict in Rann of Kutch started when India instead of preferring talks started moving its troops into area claimed by Pakistan. No heed was paid to repercussions or chances of escalation. Pakistan was left with no choice but to militarily defend its claim. Later in August when insurgency started in Indian Held Kashmir, it was the India which initiated conventional war by attacking across ceasefire line in Bedori Bulge, Jura Bulge and Kargil areas. Once territory was lost in these sectors, Pakistan was left with no choice but to cross ceasefire line in Chhamb sector. India further escalated the war on 6 September when it attacked across international boundary without declaration of war. One can clearly see that India not only provoked the war but kept on escalating it.

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CHAPTER 3

THE UNEASY PEACE FROM 1966 LEADING TO 1971 WAR

The period from 1965 to 71 can be divided into two phases i.e., the last years of Ayub Khan (65-69) and the Yahya Khan's years (69-71).

1965 War had a major impact on Pakistan's international relations and national environment. During the war "China responded generously to Pakistan's request for assistance. Apart from providing munitions and spare parts, China was prepared to fly in the material by fighter aircraft."[1] "USA adopted a neutral, hands-off stance. On 8 September (1965), the US decided to stop supply of arms to both Pakistan and India.[2] "The seemingly even-handed approach by the US was deceptive. In actual practice it affected Pakistan only, since India received most of its arms either from USSR or from its own armouries. Pakistan had higher expectations from its ally (USA).”[3] "Indonesia extended memorable assistance, readily agreeing to provide some MIG aircraft. It sent two submarines and four missile boats. Iran and Turkey provided plane-loads of arms and ammunition. Prime Minister Kosygin (of Soviet Union) 'took exception to India's crossing the international border,' reflecting a change in its earlier blanket support to India."[4] Soviet Union's relative neutral stance was not lost on Pakistan. The hands-off policy of USA and UK, and relatively less partisan policy of Soviet Union at that time, gravitated Pakistan to accept Prime Minister Kosygin's offer to mediate settlement between India and Pakistan. Before going to Tashkent, Ayub Khan visited London and Washington in December (1965). Johnson (the US President) told him that the alliance between United States and Pakistan was over. US aid in future would hinge on Pakistan's willingness to curtail its ties with China.[5]

"The Pakistani delegation to the Tashkent Conference, 4-10 January 1966, was internally divided on how far to go in pressing for settlement of the Kashmir dispute."[6] The stalemated war did not permit Pakistan to take a strong negotiating posture on Kashmir issue. Tashkent Declaration provided for withdrawal of forces to positions held on 5 August 1965, but made no direct reference to the crucial Kashmir question.

People of Pakistan believed that Pakistan Army had gained victory, over India. For the people of Pakistan, it was difficult to comprehend why we accepted ceasefire and Tashkent Declaration if the Army had done so well in the war. It exposed Ayub Khan to accusations of squandering at negotiating table what the Army had won on the battlefield.

Chinese President visited Pakistan in March 1966. China agreed to provide Pakistan with weapons, vehicles and military equipment that could suffice for three infantry divisions.[7]

Pakistan's normalisation of relations with the USSR gained momentum after 1965 war. A military delegation visited Moscow in 1966, followed by Ayub Khan in 1967. Pakistan decided not to renew the lease of Badaber air base to USA beyond July 1968. USSR reciprocated by agreeing to sell a small quantity of military equipment to Pakistan.[8] "On 12 April 1967, the US announced termination of military assistance to Pakistan (and India) exempting only cash sales of spare parts for the previously supplied equipment on a case-by-case basis."[9] As a result of US termination of military assistance, Pakistan had to rely mainly on China for military hardware after 1965. USSR sold some weapons and equipment for a very limited period.

Post 1965 War analysis had sobering effect on Pakistan. Pakistan had managed to defend its sovereignty by the skin of its teeth. Indian blatant escalation of war and employment of military to resolve political issues forced Pakistani strategic planners to strengthen its armed forces. The war highlighted that Pakistan army lacked infantry, division HQs and corps HQs. The offensive

of 1 Armoured Division in Khem Karan sector had failed due to less infantry and 6 Armoured Division had to be employed in defensive role again for the same reason. It also became clear that HQ 12 Division could not effectively command troops spread over a wide area along the entire ceasefire line in Azad Kashmir. Lack of troops and a controlling HQ in the province of Sindh was also acutely felt. Resultantly 9 and 16 Infantry Divisions were raised at Kharian and Quetta respectively. 16 Division was raised at Quetta because Balochistan was devoid of active-duty troops after move of 8 Division to Sialkot. The two infantry divisions were paired with 6 and 1 Armoured Divisions respectively and both divisional groups designated as GHQ Reserves North and South respectively. 23 Infantry Divisional HQ was raised at Jhelum and 12 Divisions area from south of Poonch city till Chenab River was placed under its command. 18 Division was raised to look after the defence of Sindh province. Therefore, Indian act of attacking Pakistan across the international borders forced Pakistan to spend more on its defence.

On 29 January 1968, Ayub Khan suffered a severe heart attack and remained hospitalised for 10 days. It kept him out of office for a month and a half. In July he went to England for a medical check-up. Ayub Khan's sickness seriously weakened his position as President. Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto after his removal from the government had started agitation against President Ayub Khan. His political agitation started gaining ground in West Pakistan. In November 1968, one of the protesting students of a polytechnic school at Rawalpindi was killed during a clash with police. Bhutto took advantage of the situation and turned the funeral procession into a political movement. Thereafter, demonstrations, strikes, burning and looting became a daily occurrence. The opposition formed an alliance called Democratic Action Committee under Nawabzada Nasarullah Khan. On 17 January 1969, Ayub Khan proposed to meet the opposition at a Round Table Conference.[10] The opposition agreed on the conditions that emergency be lifted and political prisoners be released. Ayub Khan not only agreed to

these conditions but also that he would not contest in the next elections, and that 1962 Constitution could be scrapped and a new formed beside withdrawing cases against Agartala conspirators. The conference was reassembled on 10 March. Nawabzada Nasarullah Khan asked for regional autonomy and elections on direct adult franchise. Mujib Ur Rehman elaborated his famous six points.[11] The six points had initially been made public, in March 1966 by him calling for a new constitution under which the federal government would be responsible 'only for defence and foreign affairs'.[12] Ayub Khan's health, popularity and control over the government were all failing. Instances of defiance of government authority, especially in Dacca and Karachi, were increasing on daily basis.[13] Instead of following the Constitution, Ayub Khan wrote a letter to Gen Yahya Khan on 24 March 1969 handing over the government to the Army.[14] On 25 March 1969, Ayub Khan resigned and Gen Yahya Khan took over the Government of Pakistan.[15]

International environment had taken a major turn with the breakup of Chinese and USSR alliance in 1968. Mr. Nixon became the President of USA in February 1969 and Yahya Khan took over power in Pakistan in March 69. "The Nixon administration decided on 'a new beginnings' in relations with China, following its split with Soviet Union. In January 1970, the US offered to send a representative to Beijing to consider ideas to reduce tension. In October 1970, Nixon asked Yahya Khan, in a meeting in New York, to inform the Chinese leaders, during upcoming visit to China in November, that he considered rapprochement with China essential."[16]

Within Pakistan, in the December 1970 elections, Awami League led by Mujibur Rehman swept the polls in East Pakistan by winning 167 out of 169 seats. It gave Awami League absolute majority in the 313 members National Assembly. Pakistan People's Party (PPP) emerged as the second largest party, but won seats only in West Pakistan. PPP wanted a share in the power on the basis of being the representative of West Pakistan.[17] Sheikh

Mujib Ur Rehman wanted the future constitution to be based on his six points. He refused Yahya Khan's invitation to visit Islamabad for talks before the new constituent assembly was convened. On 13 February 1971, Yahya Khan announced the convening of the Assembly on 3 March, at Dacca, hoping the politicians would resolve the matters among themselves. But Bhutto, the leader of PPP, announced his refusal to attend the session till major constitutional and power sharing issues were decided beforehand.[18] "He threatened a revolution from Karachi to Khyber."[19] Gen Yahya asked Mujib to come to Rawalpindi to discuss a new date for inauguration of the assembly. Mujib refused to come to Rawalpindi.[20] Despite warnings by Mujib and the military leadership in East Pakistan, the national assembly session was postponed on March 1, 1971, without giving a fresh date.[21] Mujib was angry, bitter and frustrated. He called for a general strike on March 7, 1971.[22] All hell was let loose in East Pakistan as soon as the announcement was heard. Portraits of the founder of the nation were burnt, the Pakistani flag was desecrated, the army was abused and taunted and Bangladesh national anthem was played on Dacca TV on March 3. Several people including policemen were killed. Lt Nazr ul Islam of 24 Field Regiment was shot at near the railway crossing on March 5.[23] On 4 March, Lt Gen Sahibzada Yaqoob Khan, the recently appointed Governor of East Pakistan, resigned. His replacement Lt Gen Tikka Khan, reached Dacca on 7 March.[24] There was killing, burning, looting, ambushing, brick batting and molestation of non- Bengalis throughout East Pakistan.[25]

Gen Yahya, the President of Pakistan reached Dacca on 15 March. No Bengali civil servant or politician received him at the airport. Starting on 16 March, talks between the government and Awami League continued till 24 March. During the eight days talks, Yahya Khan got convinced that Awami League was not for united Pakistan and wanted confederation on their six-point basis. On 25 March, Gen Yahya Khan took the fateful decision to launch military action in East Pakistan to restore the writ of the

government and to ensure the integrity of the country. He left for Karachi the same day. The military action started on night 25-26 March. Between March 2 and March 26, some sources put the Bihari's and West Pakistanis killed by Awami League workers at 100,000. Their shops were burnt, their houses looted, their woman folk taken away, raped and bodies mutilated.[26]

OPERATION SEARCH LIGHT

The military action code named Operation Search Light to restore writ of the government began at 1 am on night of 26 March 71.[27] Troops available with Lt Gen Tikka Khan for this operation were 14 Infantry Division commanded by Major General Khadim Hussain Raja, consisting of four infantry brigades, (23, 53, 57 and 107 Infantry Brigades) an armoured regiment, (29 Cavalry) five artillery regiments, (23, 24, 31, 53, and 55 Field Regiments) three mortar batteries, (83, 88 and 171 Mortar Batteries) one light anti-aircraft regiment, (43 Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment) and one commando battalion (3 Commando Battalion). Six East Bengal Regiments, 16,000 strong East Pakistan Rifles (17 Wings, each Wing having four to five companies) and 32,000 police were sympathetic to the Bengali cause and could not be relied upon. Lt Gen Tikka had 12,000 men in uniform and 13 battalions of Mujahids and Razakars. He was opposed by about 52,000 armed Bengalis and 60 million volatile local population spread over 55,000 square miles of territory.[28]

Within 15 minutes of Operation Searchlight, Sheikh Mujib Ur Rehman was arrested from his residence.[29] Dr Kamal Hussain was also captured. All other leaders of Awami League however managed to escape.[30]

18 Punjab Regiment, part of 57 Infantry Brigade, cleared rebels from Dacca University. It was supported by tanks and artillery.[31] 32 Punjab, another battalion of 57 Brigade, cleared police lines in Dacca.[32] 22 Baloch disarmed East Pakistan Rifles troops at Dacca.

107 Brigade was located at Jessore. Troops from 27 Baloch, 25 Baloch and guns of 55 Field Regiment were used to disarm 1 East Bengal (EB) Regiment at Jessore Cantonment. When 1 EB Regiment resisted disarming and opened fire, troops from 27 Baloch and 25 Baloch returned fire. Two guns of 55 Field Regiment fired directly into the quarter guard of 1 EB Regiment.[33] 25 Baloch and a battery of 55 Field Regiment were sent to rescue a company of 27 Baloch located at Kushtia. Due to a broken bridge en route, the relief column had to come back and the isolated company was wiped off.[34] On 10 April, 12 Punjab with a battery of 55 Field Regiment secured Jhikargacha. Benapole was secured by 25 Baloch on 14 April. On 17 April, 12 Punjab linked up with 57 Brigade at Kushtia.[35] On 20 April, 25 Baloch with a battery of 55 Field Regiment secured Satkhaira. By the end of April, 107 Brigade had cleared its area of responsibility.[36]

Headquarters 23 Brigade and 29 Cavalry were located at Rangpur. Rest of the three battalions of the Brigade i.e., 3 East Bengal Regiment, 26 FF and 23 Field Regiment were located at Saidpur. 26 FF and 23 Field Regiment was tasked to disarm 3 EB Regiment. 3 EBR had entrenched themselves in their unit lines. 26 FF launched an attack on 1 April 71. After a short and bitter action in which guns were used at ranges of only 800 yards, majority of the men of 3 EB Regiment were overpowered. Some remnants fled to Parbatipur and entrenched there.[37] A company each of 4 and 26 FF, supported by four guns of 23 Field Regiment and tanks from 29 Cavalry cleared Parbatipur on 8 April. The remnants of 3 EB Regiment fled to Dinajpur and joined the rebels of East Pakistan Rifles. They murdered all West Pakistani officers and men in the area. Later two companies of 26 FF supported by tanks from 29 Cavalry and a battery of 23 Field Regiment had to mount a major operation to clear Dinajpur of the rebels by last light 13 April. Majority of the non-Bengalis had been mercilessly butchered in Dinajpur. On 14 April, 8 Baloch, troop of tanks ex 29 Cavalry and a battery of 23 Field Regiment cleared Birganj and then moved to clear Thakurgaon on 15 April.[38] On 20 April, troops

from 26 FF, 8 Baloch, 29 Cavalry and 23 Field Regiment cleared Hilli.[39] Thereafter some troops of 4 FF, portion of 8 Baloch, a few tanks from 29 Cavalry and a battery from 23 Field were placed under 34 Brigade for clearance of Bogra. Attack on Bogra involved fighting in built up area. Guns were used in direct fire to flush out the rebels fighting from houses. Bogra was eventually cleared by 21 April but not before hundreds of lives were lost including civilians who were caught in the cross fire.[40]

Immediately after the start of military operation, Lt Gen Tikka Khan had requested for additional troops. On 30 March 71, 9 and 16 Infantry Divisions were ordered to move to East Pakistan. The two divisions reached East Pakistan by first week of April. They however left behind their heavy weapons, and were without supporting artillery.[41]

53 Brigade was located at Comilla. It was being commanded by Brig Iqbal Shafi. Units of 53 Brigade were, 4 EBR, 24 FF and 53 Field Regiment located at Comilla and 20 Baloch located at Chittagong. 4 EB Regiment revolted and crossed over to Agartala in India.[42] 20 Baloch at Chittagong was over-whelming outnumbered. 25 FF which had arrived from Karachi on 26 March was therefore flown to Chittagong to reinforce this battalion. Brig Iqbal Shafi was ordered to move to Chittagong with 24 FF. 53 Field Regiment was left to secure Comilla. This was done on night 25-26 March with complete success.[43] 8 EB Regiment at Chittagong revolted under their second-in-command Maj Zia Ur Rehman. (Later Gen Zia. and President of Bangladesh) Brig Iqbal and 24 FF after suffering many casualties, due to ambushes laid by the rebels, finally linked up with Chittagong on March 31.[44]

In the second week of April, Lt Gen Tikka Khan allotted the area to the three available divisions. 9 Division, at Comilla, under Maj Gen Shaukat Riza had 313 Brigade at Sylhet, 117 Brigade at Comilla and 53 Brigade at Chittagong. 14 Division, at Dacca, under Maj Gen Rahim Khan had 27 Brigade at Mymensingh, 57 Brigade, and 107 Brigade at Jessore. 16 Division, at Nator, under

Maj Gen Nazar Hussain had 23 Brigade at Rangpur and 34 Brigade at Bogra- Nator.[45]

117 Brigade and 33 Baloch were flown to Comilla on 6 April. On 8 April, Brig Khalid, the Commander of 117 Brigade, dispatched 33 Baloch, a battery of 53 Field Regiment and a mortar troop to secure Chandpur. After overcoming an ambush at Lal Mai and clearing a road block at Hajiganj, the column secured Chandpur by last light of 10 April. The column returned to Comilla on 13 April, leaving one company of 33 Baloch at Chandpur. On 14 April, 117 Brigade started their advance towards Kasba- Brahminbaria- Akhaura.[46] The column consisted of 22 Baloch, 12 FF and a battery of 53 Field Regiment. Kasba virtually was a death trap. It was an enclave barely one thousand yards square with Indian Territory on three sides. Kasba was secured by mid-day on 14 April. However, at night there was sporadic firing and some 3-inch mortar shells landed near Pakistani gun positions on the main road. On 17 April, the column secured Ganga Sagar railway station, about seven miles north of Kasba. Thereafter, 117 Brigade moved towards Brahminbaria. After encountering ambushes and resistance by the rebels, the brigade linked up with 22 Baloch on 19 April. 117 Brigade was then ordered to move south and clear Feni. The Brigade ordered 39 Baloch with a battery of 53 Field Regiment to advance along road Laksham - Begumganj- Feni. 12 FF was tasked to advance along track Laksham -Feni. The advance started on 21 April and Feni was secured on 24 April.[47]

57 Brigade was located at Dacca. 18 Punjab of 57 Brigade had cleared Dacca University on the night of 25-26 March.[48] 57 Brigade was ordered to linkup with 25 Punjab at Rajshahi. Rajshahi was about 150 miles west of Dacca. 25 Punjab with two companies had been surrounded at Rajshahi by EPR. One company of this unit had earlier been wiped off by the rebels at Pabna. 57 Brigade commenced their advance towards Rajshahi on night 7-8 April from Dacca. Despite many demolished bridges, 57

Brigade linked up with Rajshahi garrison on 12 April. The speed of advance, imbalanced the rebels and restored government's writ in the area.[49] 27 Brigade reached Dacca in first week of April and was placed under 14 Division. It was tasked to clear Narsingdhi, Madhupur and Mymensingh area. 31 Baloch supported by a field battery of 31 Field Regiment commenced operation on 10 April. Madhupur and Jamalpur were secured on 19 and 20 April respectively. By middle May the area between Dacca and Mymensingh had been cleared of rebels.[50]

In Sylhet, 31 Punjab held onto the defence of the airport against heavy odds. 9 Division tasked 313 Brigade to move to Sylhet along with 32 Baloch and take under command 31 Punjab and thereafter link up with 117 Brigade and secure Sylhet district. On 7 April, Headquarters 313 Brigade, 32 Baloch and 81 Mortar battery were air lifted to Sylhet. 32 Baloch was directed to clear the road Sylhet -Maulvi Bazar. The unit was given two motor boats and a troop of 120 mm mortars. Five miles short of Maulvi Bazar some rebel positions had to be cleared. After securing Maulvi Bazar, 32 Baloch secured Srimangal by second week of May. Five miles short of Maulvi Bazar a rebel position was eliminated. Maulvi Bazar was cleared around 27-28 April. Next day 32 Baloch advanced towards Srimangal and linked up with troops from 117 Brigade on 30 April.

Starting on 26 March, the rebellion in East Pakistan was suppressed and writ of the government restored by 31 May 71 by three infantry divisions of Pakistan Army.[51]

With the move of 9 and 16 Divisions to East Pakistan in end March - early April 71, Pakistan Army's two strategic reserves were imbalanced. To regain balance, 17 Infantry Division was raised on 31 March at Kharian and 33 Division was raised on 26 April 71 at Quetta.

In East Pakistan, immediately after establishing the writ of the government, the military authorities started the pacification and rehabilitation efforts to reintegrate Bengali population into

national mainstream. From counter insurgency, emphasis shifted to soft handling.[52] Camps were established all along border to receive returning refugees. General amnesty to all displaced persons was announced. "By middle of May the government had restored normalcy over almost all of East Pakistan."[53]

While government of Pakistan was feeling confident about outcome of military operation, Indra Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister was working on different plans. India's attempt at subverting the Bengali elements in the Pakistan armed forces against central leadership goes back to 1963.[54] Agartala conspiracy was part of this Indian plan to break away East Pakistan from rest of Pakistan and turn it into a weak client state. "It was as early as 28 April 1971 that She (Indra Gandhi) conveyed her intention of attacking East Pakistan. At a cabinet meeting where Chief of the Army Staff, Gen Maneckshaw was invited, she told him, "Be prepared to go into East Pakistan." Maneckshaw replied, "That would mean going to war with Pakistan." "We do not mind it," was her response.[55] Maneckshaw told her that the army needed six to seven months to be ready for war. He insisted, at a minimum, on waiting until November when weather in the Himalayas would make Chinese intervention more difficult.[56] All efforts by Pakistan Government to bring normalcy and reconciliation were therefore thwarted by the Indians. All kinds of hurdles were created to prevent Bengali refugees from returning to Pakistan. Eight fully equipped Mukti Bahaini battalions with six training centres were created in India all around East Pakistan.[57] Besides, over 83 training camps were established, on Indian soil, barely a few kilometres from the border.[58] Indian strategy was to make military preparations for war in the available six months, launch exterior manoeuvre to isolate/ discredit Pakistan, gain international sympathy for Bengalis in order to legitimise the planned war, use Mukti Bahaini to weaken Pakistani Army and gather information about terrain and deployment of Pakistan Army. Indian conspiracy hatched in 1963, to weaken Pakistan by alienating population of East Pakistan, had been

thwarted by Pakistan army. However, Indra Gandhi was not ready to leave Pakistan off the hook. The hatred Indian leaders had displayed towards Pakistan right from the beginning was taking its toll. Peace would not be given any chance whatever the cost in human lives or future consequences in the region.

Yahya Khan at this time was confident that his decision to use military force in East Pakistan was bearing fruit. He therefore, turned his attention to international relations. Pakistan during this period facilitated Kissinger's secret trip to Beijing on 9-11 July 1971.[59] "When news of Kissinger's visit to Beijing broke, Moscow was furious and decided to punish Pakistan....by hastily signing a treaty with India on 9 August 71 that in effect freed India of the fear of possible Chinese intervention against its design to cut Pakistan into two. Moscow also wanted to humiliate China by making it a helpless spectator of Pakistan's defeat and breakup."[60] With the Soviet shield in place, and veto in its pocket to block and UN Security Council move, India put its preparations for war in full gear. In contrast, conditions in Islamabad were confused and chaotic. The importance of Indo- Soviet treaty was not correctly assessed.[61]

While Yahya Khan wanted to avoid another war with India, Indra Gandhi was determined to break up Pakistan. "She rejected Washington's suggestion for UN monitoring of the border in order to curb guerrilla activities from its territory. By October 71, Yahya Khan informed Washington that he was willing to grant full autonomy to East Pakistan. A month later he was even agreeable to a unilateral withdrawal of forces from East Pakistan."[62] However Indra Gandhi was not interested in peaceful resolution of East Pakistani issue. She wanted her pound of Pakistani flesh i.e., to humiliate Pakistan and incapacitate it forever, making it a weak client state. Therefore India, without a formal declaration of war, launched an all-out offensive against East Pakistan on 21 November 1971.[63]

1971 war was fought in two theatres, the East Pakistan and the

West Pakistan Theatre of war. India initiated an undeclared war of aggression on 21 November 1971 in East Pakistan to achieve her politico - military aim to militarily defeat Pakistan and create Bangladesh. Pakistan opened the Western front on 3 December to deny India these objectives. India succeeded in her design and Pakistan failed to create desired effects in the Western theatre. Main effects of the war were created in the East Pakistan. Western theatre remained a side show and failed to create even auxiliary effects. Therefore, East Pakistan Theatre of war will be covered before the Western Theatre.

EAST PAKISTAN THEATRE OF WAR

The events leading to undeclared Indian attack on East Pakistan on 21 November have already been explained. While planning the defence of East Pakistan, Lt Gen Shahibzada Yaqub had based his plans on two contingencies. In Contingency A, i.e., in case India only provided moral support to an uprising by the locals. In such an eventuality, forward defensive posture was to be adopted along the border to deny logistic support and infiltration by the rebels. Contingency B was a major insurgency accompanied by India invading East Pakistan. In such an eventuality, main defences were to be around Dacca with light elements deployed near the border to delay the enemy advance towards the Capital.[64] However Commander Eastern Command, Lt Gen Niazi, contemplated a forward posture with strong points and fortresses along the forward areas in all eventualities. Due to lack of troops most of these points were weakly held leaving little troops for the defence of Dacca.[65] Lt Gen Niazi was obsessed with the possibility of Mukti Bahaini capturing some territory and establishing Bangladesh government on East Pakistan soil.[66] Due to wrong assumption and faulty strategy, Niazi was weak all along the border and his centre of gravity i.e., Dacca was poorly defended. It was a recipe for disaster.

DEPLOYMENT OF PAKISTANI TROOPS

East Pakistan was divided into five sectors to be defended by

three regular and two adhoc divisions.

9 Infantry Division was responsible for the Southwest Sector i.e., area south of River Ganga. The Division was being commanded by Maj Gen M H Ansari. HQ 9 Division moved to Maghura, while the tactical HQ remained at Jessore. The division had two regular brigades and one adhoc brigade.

57 Brigade under Brig Manzoor had its HQ at Jhenida. 18 Punjab less a company was at Mehrpur. One company of 18 Punjab was at Darshana. 29 Baloch less a company and one company of 21 Punjab were at Daulatnagar. One company of 29 Baloch was placed at Chuadanga as brigade reserve. 49 Field Regiment was providing fire support to these units.

107 Brigade under Brig Hayat had its HQ at Jessore. 15 FF was guarding Satkhaira approach. 22 FF was guarding Benapole-Jessore approach.[67] 38 FF was deployed from Jibanagar to Chaughaca. The three battalions were being supported by 55 Field Regiment and a Troop of 211 mortar battery.

314 Adhoc Brigade at Khulna was commanded by Brig Fazle Hameed. It had no regular troops. Divisional reserves comprised of 6 Punjab, 21 Punjab less two companies, 3 Armoured squadron and a section of SSG.

16 Division was being commanded by Maj Gen Nazar Hussain. Division HQ was located at Bogra and was responsible for the Northern Sector i.e., area north of Rivers Ganga and west of Jamuna. The Division had three regular and one Adhoc brigades. 23 Brigade under Brig Ansari was located at Rangpur and responsible for area north of line Dinajpur, Rangpur and Kurigram.[68] The brigade consisted of 8 Punjab, 25 Punjab, 34 Punjab, 48 Punjab and 26 FF. 48 Field Regiment was providing fire support to the brigade.

34 Brigade under Brig Abdul Naeem was located at Rajshahi and its area of responsibility included Rajshahi, Pabna and Nawabganj. The brigade had 32 Punjab and 32 Baloch under its

command. 117 Mortar Battery was providing fire support to the brigade.

205 Brigade under Brig Tajammal Hussain was located at Bogra and responsible for Hilli, Ghoraghat, Patnitola and Bogra. 8 Baloch was at Joypurhat, 4 FF at Hilli and 13 FF at Naogaon. 80 Field Regiment was providing fire support to the brigade.

An Adhoc Brigade initially raised at Rajshahi under Brig Ashraf was later moved to Dacca.[69]

14 Division under Maj Gen Qazi Abdul Majeed was located at Bariab Bazar and was responsible for the defence of area east of rive Meghna including Sylhet, Maulvi Bazar, and Brahman Baria down to Salda Nadi. It had two regular and one adhoc brigades. 27 Brigade under Brig Saadullah was located at Brahman Baria and responsible for area Madhupur to Salda Nadi. The Brigade consisted of 12 FF and 33 Baloch.[70] Artillery support was being provided by ten 105 mm howitzers from 31 Field Regiment, two 105 mm howitzers from 53 Field Regiment and two mortars from 210 mortar battery.[71]

202 Adhoc Brigade under Brig Saleemullah was located at Sylhet. It consisted of 31 Punjab, two companies of 12 AK, three companies of FC, three companies of EPCAF, Razakars and a battery of 31 Field Regiment.

313 Brigade, under Brig Iftikhar, was located at Maulvi Bazar and was made responsible for the area from Latu to Titas River. It consisted of 22 Baloch, 30 FF and one wing of FC. Artillery support was being provided by 210 Mortar Battery and three 105 mm howitzers.[72]

39 Division under Maj Gen Rahim was raised on 18 October. The Division was made responsible for defence of area east of River Meghna from Salda Nadi to the border with Burma. Division HQ was at Chandpur. It had three regular and one Adhoc brigades. Artillery support consisted of 53 Field Regiment less two guns and 171 Mortar Battery.[73]

117 Brigade under Brig Atif was located at Comilla and defending area from Salda Nadi, Laksham, to Daudkandi. The brigade consisted of 30 Punjab, 25 FF and 23 Punjab. Artillery support consisted of 13 guns of 53 Field Regiment.



Map 14.

Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

53 Brigade under Brig Aslam Niazi was located at Feni and responsible for area that included Chaudagram, Feni and Belonia. The brigade consisted of 15 Baloch, 39 Baloch and 21 AK less three companies. Artillery support was being provided by a battery (5 guns) of 53 Field Regiment.

91 Adhoc Brigade under Brig Taskeen was located at Karer Hat and responsible for area that included Ramgarh, Karer Hat and Chittagong Hill tracts, and east of river Feni.[74] The Brigade consisted of two companies of 24 FF and a collection of Mujahids, Rangers etc. 171 Mortar Battery less a troop provided it artillery support.

97 Brigade under Brig Atta Malik was located at Chittagong and was responsible for the defence of Chittagong hill tracts till the border with Burma. It consisted of 48 Baloch, 24 FF less two companies, 2 Commando less one company and a marine battalion. Two 120 mm mortars with crews, from 171 Mortar Battery were placed under the brigade on 4 December for artillery support.[75]

36 Adhoc Division was raised in November 71 under Maj Gen Jamshed. It consisted of only one brigade i.e., 93 Adhoc brigade. It was tasked to defend Dacca at all costs.[76] 93 Brigade consisted of 31 Baloch located at Jamalpur and 33 Punjab at Halurghat. 83 Mortar Battery with twelve 120 mm mortars provided artillery support to the division.[77] It defies all logic why 36 Division was raised if it had only two infantry battalions to command?

INDIAN PLANS AND DEPLOYMENT OF TROOPS

At Indian Army level, Maneckshaw, the Indian Army Chief, "decided to concentrate maximum effort for offensive operations against East Pakistan..... (and) a general defensive posture in the west."[78] Indian plans of offensive against East Pakistan were based on the expectation that Pakistan would concentrate its military strength in areas of political and tactical importance after delaying Indian attack by deploying covering troops as per

requirements of conventional warfare.[79] Gen Niazi however did the opposite by tying all his troops to strong points and fortresses along the border. The task allotted to Indian Eastern Command by the Indian Army HQ was to "destroy the bulk of the Pakistani forces in the eastern theatre and to occupy major portion of East Pakistan." To accomplish this task, Gen Aurora, the Commander Eastern Command, "planned a multipronged offensive from as many directions as possible, to destroy the enemy forces and capture maximum territory." Surprisingly, Dacca was not spelled out as a strategic objective at Army or Eastern Command level. Detailed plans were formulated in Calcutta (HQ Eastern Command) for each sector, and each axis of advance, leaving little scope for field commanders to exercise any innovation or change.[80] Allocation of resources and tasks to various sectors were as follows.

SOUTH WESTERN SECTOR

This was the sector being defended by Pakistani 9 Division. Indian 2 Corps was assigned the offensive responsibility in this sector. It had two divisions, (9 Infantry and 4 Mountain) one Para brigade (50 Brigade) less a battalion, 45 Cavalry regiment (PT-76) and a squadron of 63 Cavalry (T-55). Initial objectives were Jessore and Jhenida and then Khulna, Hardinge Bridge, Faridpur and Goalundo Ghat ferries.

NORTH WESTERN SECTOR

Against Pakistan's 16 Division, India employed 33 Corps. This Corps had 20 and 6 Mountain Divisions. 20 Mountain Division had been reinforced with an additional infantry brigade, two armoured regiments less a squadron and one engineer brigade. 6 Mountain Division consisted of two brigades, (9 & 71 Mountain Brigades). 6 Mountain Division kept 9 Mountain Brigade in defensive role against any threat to Siliguri Corridor and employed 71 Brigade in offensive role along Pachagarh-Thakaurgoan axis thereby further increasing the security of Siliguri corridor. [81] 20 Mountain Division was tasked to cut the

Hilli-Gaibanda waistline and thereafter, situation permitting, thrusts were to be launched to capture Bogra or Rangpur.[82]

EASTERN SECTOR

Indian 4 Corps, having three divisions (8, 57, Mountain and 23 Infantry divisions) less a brigade, Kilo force having two battalions, a number of EBR battalions and two squadrons of armour (PT 76), formed the Indian "Main Effort" in the Eastern theatre. The Corps was tasked to clear the sector east of River Meghna i.e., the area being defended by Pakistani 14 Infantry and 39 Adhoc divisions. This sector provided the shortest approach to Dacca.[83]

NORTH CENTRAL SECTOR

101 Communications Zone under Maj Gen Gurbax Singh Gill was responsible for offensive operations in area bounded by Rivers Jamuna and Meghna. Troops allocated were 95 Mountain Brigade under Brig Kler and an adhoc brigade size force (6 Bihar, 83 BSF Battalion and Mukti Bahaini) designated as Sector HQ under Brig Sant Singh.[84] 167 Mountain Brigade under Brig Irani was released to 101 Communication Zone on 8 December, making it a division size force.[85] On the Pakistani side, this sector was being defended by two infantry battalions under 93 Adhoc Brigade.

Relative strength in the Eastern Theatre was heavily tilted in India's favour. In manoeuvre arms, India had 72 infantry battalions against 34 of Pakistan i.e., 2.5: 1 superiority. There were 6 Indian armour regiments against 1 Pakistani unit i.e., 6: 1 advantage. However, the main Indian advantage was in fire power. India had 46 artillery regiments against 6 Pakistani units. While Indian artillery had a proper mix of field and medium calibre, all Pakistani artillery units were of field calibre, including some obsolete 3.7-inch howitzers. India had 8: 1 superiority in number of artillery units. Fire power ratio had further been tilted in India's favour owing to availability of air power to it. India had 11

squadrons against 1 of Pakistan.[86] The only Pakistani squadron was also rendered ineffective after four days of the war.[87]Apart from many other political and military blunders, disproportionate FIRE superiority was one of the main reasons for Indian military victory. Pakistani fire resources were acutely short yet they were frittered away by deploying them all along the border instead of concentrating them at the points of decision. National and military leadership should have ensured that troops were sent to battle only when they had a fair chance of victory. Inferiority in numbers can be compensated by superior training and morale to an extent. Pakistani troops in East Pakistan had little chance to accomplish the assigned task primarily because of the prevailing political situation and international environment.

CONDUCT OF OPERATIONS:

SOUTH WESTERN SECTOR

Pakistan was holding this sector with 9 Division having two brigades. (107 and 57 Brigades) 107 Brigade with three infantry battalions (15 FF, 22 FF and 38 FF), one company R&S, a Mujahid battalion and 55 Field Regiment along with a troop of 211 Mortar Battery was responsible for the defence of Jessore sub sector. There were three main approaches leading to Jessore. Jibanagar approach was held by 38 FF, Benapol approach by 22 FF and Satkhira approach by 15 FF.

India employed 9 Infantry division ex 2 Corps against Jessore sub sector. 9 (Indian) Division under Maj Gen Dalbir Singh had four infantry brigades i.e., 32, 42, 45 and 350 Infantry Brigades. He was tasked to secure Jessore by D+7 and then be prepared to detach a suitable force to capture Khulna. He was also told to be prepared to capture Magura or Jhenida in coordination with 4 Mountain Division after the fall of Jessore.[88] Maj Gen Dalbir Singh planned to move behind the Pakistani troops at Jhinkargacha with one brigade coming from Bayra, second from Gobardanga and third brigade advancing along the road from Bangaon and then capture Jessore before the Pakistanis could reorganise.[89]

In the morning of 20 November, Maj Gen Dalbir Singh ordered 42 Brigade to secure Garibpur on night 20-21 November. Indian 14 Punjab started crossing river Kabadak in assault boats at 7:30 am.[90] India had once again attacked Pakistan without declaring war and denied it in front of international media and rest of the world. Indian propaganda was so effective that most of the world believed Indian lies and seriously doubted the Pakistani version. Indian 14 Punjab reached Garibpur along with PT-76 tanks in the fading light and took up defence along Garibpur-Muhammadpur track.[91] Commander 107 Pakistani Brigade, Brig Hayat was ordered to counter attack and recapture the area. The counter attack was launched on 21 November by three infantry companies

(two of 6 Punjab and one of 21 Punjab R&S) and 3 Independent armour squadron (Equipped with M 24 light tanks). The infantry managed to capture part of Garibpur but Pakistani armoured squadron lost ten out of its twelve tanks. M 24 light tank was no match to Indian PT 76 tanks. GOC 9 Pakistan Division realising that the enemy was too strong, especially in armour, decided to deploy 6 Punjab and Company 21 Punjab at Afra nullah, a few kilometres west of Jessore cantonment. The Indians followed the withdrawing Pakistani troops on 22 November.[92] The same day Brig Hayat asked his GOC's permission to withdraw one battalion to Jessore. Permission to pull out one battalion was not granted. Brig Hayat reorganised his brigade position and placed 6 Punjab and Company 21 Punjab along Afra embankment a few kilometres west of Jessore. Two companies of 22 FF were adjusted to contain Indian penetration towards Muhammadpur.[93] On 22 November, 12 Punjab was flown from Pabna (16 Division) and placed under 107 Brigade to reinforce Afra position. Once Indians shifted weight of their offensive towards south, 21 Punjab less two companies were moved to Muhammadpur area and two companies of 22 FF were placed under their command. 6 Punjab remained in Durgabarkati-Afra area and 12 Punjab was placed between 6 Punjab and 21 Punjab. On 23 November, one company of 38 FF defending Chuagcha was attacked and overrun on 24 November. The company withdrew to 6 Punjab position.

On night 27/28 November, 21 Punjab position at Burinda was attacked by the Indians. After suffering 42 dead, Indians called off the attack. The attack was renewed the next day by 1 J&K Battalion at 5:30 am. Due to effective artillery and infantry fire, this attack also failed. Havildar Bansi Lal of 1 J&K Battalion was made POW and presented to the world media as proof of Indian aggression which was being denied. Shockingly the world was still not ready to believe Indian military aggression against Pakistan. India kept on saying that all these attacks were by Mukti Bahaini. The failure of this attack took care of the task assigned to 9 Indian Division, i.e., to capture Jessore by D+7 which was 28

November. Commander Pakistani Eastern Command visited 107 Brigade on 29 November to compliment the troops on their great fighting effort.[94]



Map 15.
Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

Failure of Indian attack on 27-28 November forced GOC 9 Indian Division to rethink his plan. 42 Brigade was held up against Afra and Durgabarkati positions being defended by 6 Punjab and a company of 38 FF. 350 Brigade was held up against Burinda position being defended by 21 Punjab less two companies and two companies of 22 FF and 12 Punjab deployed east of it. GOC of Indian 9 Division realised that these positions were strongly held by Pakistani troops. He therefore decided to concentrate maximum strength on the northern approach. 42 Brigade was

ordered to punch a hole at Durgabarkati. 32 Brigade with all available armour was to breakout through this hole and head for Jessore.[95] 2 Sikh LI of 42 Brigade was tasked to clear a passage through Durgabarkati. Complete 9 Indian divisional artillery and a medium regiment from Corps Artillery was redeployed to support the attack.

2 Sikh LI launched its attack on 6 December at 9:30 am. 2 Sikh LI after suffering 27 casualties managed to clear the objective by 10 am. Approach to Jessore had been opened. 32 Infantry Brigade was ordered to head for Jessore. 7 Punjab with B squadron 63 Cavalry led the advance.[96] By last light 6 December, Indian tanks had reached Abdulpur, nearly six kilometres east of Afra.[97]

107 Pakistani Brigade had no reserves or depth in the defences. Brig Hayat had lost contact with 6 Punjab on his north. He realised that his troops could not reach Jessore defences before the Indians. He ordered withdrawal to Khulna in the south.[98] On 7 December, 32 Brigade resumed its advance towards Jessore and as there was no resistance en-route, secured it by midday. 42 Brigade pushed forward along the main road to Jessore as Pakistani defenders had already withdrawn. 350 Brigade also moved to Jessore along Jhinkergacha approach due to lack of opposition.[99]

Brig Hayat had given orders for withdrawal around 4 pm on 6 December i.e., after his main defences at Durgabarkati had been breached. He ordered 22 FF to withdraw to road junction Jessore-Khulna and road Jhinkargacha-Jessore, just south of Jessore and organise it as delaying position.[100] Rest of the battalions were also given locations of their delaying positions along road Jessore-Khulna.

Maj Gen Dalbir Singh pushed 32 Infantry Brigade and a squadron of 45 Cavalry (PT-76) towards Khulna and concentrated rest of his division around Jessore. 32 Brigade resumed advance at 2:30 pm on 7 December and contacted 22 FF at Ramnagar at 4 pm. Left flank of 22 FF was being guarded by a platoon of R&S. 32 Brigade Commander ordered one battalion supported by tanks

to out flank 22 FF from the west. R&S platoon was overrun by the tanks. 22 FF with great difficulty avoided being encircled and withdrew.[101]

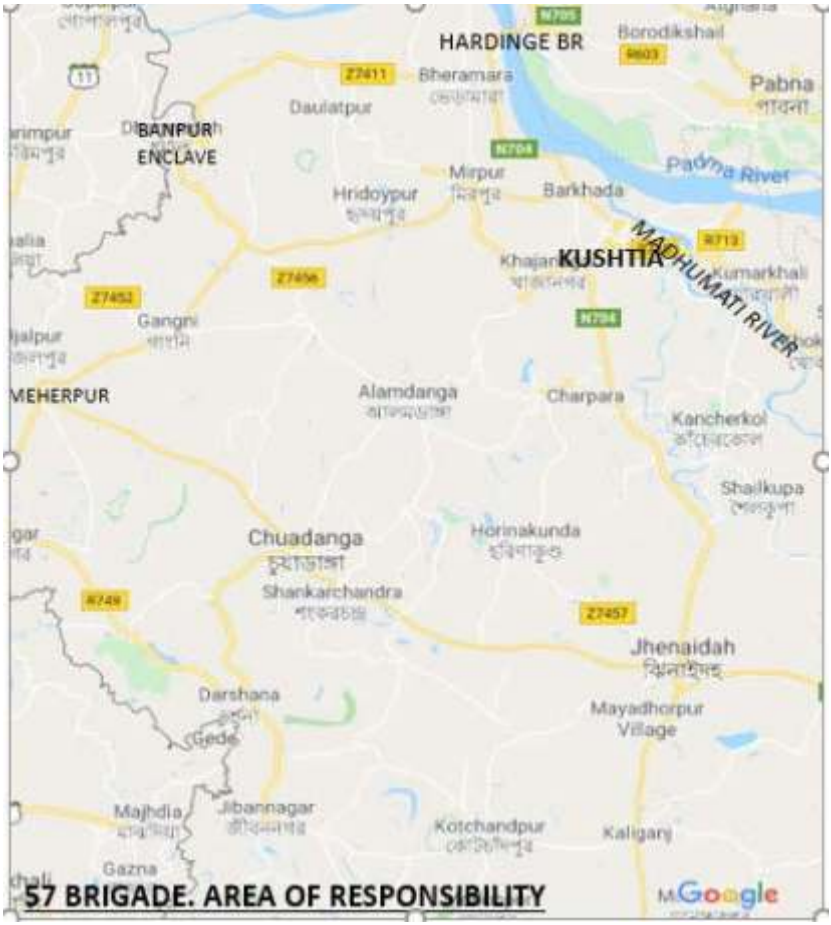
32 Brigade after pushing aside multiple delaying positions along road Jessore-Khulna contacted 107 Brigade screen position by evening on 10 December. 107 Brigade took up defence around and north of Daulatpur, a small town located 8 kilometres north of Khulna. A screen position at Phultala was cleared by Indians by last light on 11 December and main defences were contacted by 12 December. Realising that he was confronted by whole of 107 Brigade, Maj Gen Dalbir Singh decided to move 42 and 305 Brigades south to clear Khulna. It was a strategic mistake by Maj Gen Dalbir Singh. By withdrawing to Khulna, Brig Hayat had exposed not only his lines of communications, his divisional HQ but the centre of gravity of East Pakistan i.e., Dacca. Gen Dalbir instead of cashing this opportunity went after the much lesser prize i.e., 107 Brigade. Ideally, he should have contained 107 Brigade at Khulna with 32 Brigade and headed for Dacca with rest of the 9 Division.

The attack by Indians to capture Khulna was launched on 15 December with full support from tanks and divisional artillery. By first light on 16 December, two Indian battalions, 1 JAK and 4 Sikh had suffered 70 casualties each.[102] Cohesive defence and availability of fire of complete field regiment helped inflict such heavy casualties. Had this been done at Afra position, the battle would have ended differently. Further bloodshed was averted by orders to ceasefire on 16 December.

57 Brigade with two infantry battalions (18 Punjab and 29 Baloch), one R&S Company ex 21 Punjab, 49 Field Regiment and 211 Mortar Battery less a troop was responsible for the defence of Jhenida sub-sector. A Squadron 29 Cavalry joined the brigade on 23 November.

Brig Manzur, the commander of 57 Brigade appreciated that major threat in his area of responsibility was to Hardinge Bridge

along the shortest route from the border and to Jhenida city along Meherpur- Jhenida approach. He therefore deployed 29 Baloch to defend the approaches leading to Harding Bridge and Kushtia. 18 Punjab less a company was responsible for Meherpur approach. One company of 18 Punjab were defending Darshana- Meherpur approach.



Map 16.

Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

4 Mountain Division under Maj Gen Barar was tasked for operations in Jhenida sector. 4 Division consisted of 7, 41 and 62 Brigades. The division was allotted one squadron of tanks, one medium battery and one company of APCs for this operation. 7 Infantry Brigade was detached as corps reserves and deployed opposite Meherpur and Shikarpur to pose threat to Hardinge Bridge and Meherpur and thus fix Pakistani troops along these approaches. 4 Division was tasked to capture Kaliganj by D plus 6, Jhenida by D plus 8 and ferry sites over Madhumati by D plus 11. Thereafter the division was to be prepared to secure Faridpur and Goalundo Ghat ferries or capture Kushtia-Hardinge Bridge. GOC 4 Division (Barar) planned to advance on Uthali - Suaidah - Kotchandpur axis with 41 Brigade and on Jibanagar- Kaliganj axis with 62 Brigade. Thereafter 41 Brigade was to move cross country along Talsar track to Jhenida and 62 Brigade along the Kaliganj axis.

On 26 November, after seeing progress of Indian offensive against 107 Brigade, Brigadier Manzoor decided to strengthen the southern approach. He ordered an additional company of 18 Punjab to move to Darshana. D Company 18 Punjab already at Darshana was ordered to deploy one platoon at Uthalai. One troop of tanks from A Squadron 29 Cavalry was moved to Uthalai and placed in support of platoon 18 Punjab. The brigade reserve company of 29 Baloch was sent to Ansarbaria a place east of Uthalai. D Company from 38 FF was also ordered to Ansarbaria on 26 November. 178 Field Battery was moved south to support troops at Ansarbaria and Uthalai. By night 26 November, 38 FF less C and D companies was at Jibanagar. They had no artillery support or tanks with them. They had only their battalion mortars to provide indirect fire support.

On night 26-27 November, Jibanagar was attacked by 62 Brigade ex 4 Mountain Division. Overwhelmed and without artillery support, 38 FF less two companies fell back to Kalispur. Indian 41 Brigade attacked Uthalai and Ansarbaria-Andulbaria

positions on night 29-30 November.[103] The attack by 41 Indian Brigade failed and they withdrew. However, 41 Brigade renewed their attack on early morning 30 November. One platoon 18 Punjab with troop tanks at Uthalai and one company 29 Baloch at Ansarbaria-Andulbaria had no chance against an infantry brigade fully supported by divisional artillery and one squadron of tanks. Both the positions were lost by 7 am 30 November.

As soon as it was realised that complete 4 Mountain Division was operating on Jibanagar-Kotchandpur approach, 50 Punjab was released to 57 Brigade on 29 November. Brigadier Manzoor ordered 50 Punjab less two companies to take up defences at Safdarpur-Suaidah to cover approach Uthalai- Andulbaria-Kotchandpur. Other two companies of 50 Punjab were placed under command 18 Punjab at Meherpur.

Maj Gen Barar felt that Pakistani troops at Darshana were a serious threat to the rear of his advancing brigades and could not be ignored. He therefore ordered 41 Brigade to clear Darshana by 4 December.[104] 41 Brigade attacked Darshana with two infantry battalions supported by a squadron of tanks less a troop, on 3 December.[105] Darshana was being defended by C and D companies of 18 Punjab. Indians had overwhelming superiority in all components of combat power. 62 Brigade captured Darshana by 4 December, but at a very heavy cost. Indians suffered 93 casualties in this battle.[106] 18 Punjab withdrew to Chaudanga the same night where it was joined by a troop of tanks from 29 Cavalry.[107] Commander 57 Brigade, Brig Manzur immediately moved to Chaudanga with his tactical headquarters to personally control the battle.

While 41 Brigade was busy in Darshana, 62 Brigade was probing towards Kalispur. Finding it strongly held, Maj Gen Barar switched 62 Brigade to Suaidah axis and ordered it to capture Kotchandpur at the earliest. After capturing Darshana, 41 Brigade was concentrated west of Suaidah during night 4-5 December. It was ordered to move cross country along Talsar track, establish a

road block on road Jhenida- Chaudanga, west of Jhenida and later capture Jhenida. Maj Gen Barar wanted to cut the route of withdrawal of 57 Brigade to Jhenida.[108] 41 Brigade with squadron less a troop of tanks commenced its cross country move at 8 am on 5 December from Suaidah area. By last light on 5 December, 41 Brigade had established a road block at Sadhuhati on road Jhenida-Chaudanga. At the same time 62 Brigade had cleared Kotchandpur.

57 and 107 Brigades were no more capable of controlling their troops on axis Kotchandpur- Kaliganj. There was no artillery support with the two depleted battalions i.e., 38 FF and 50 Punjab. Headquarters Pakistani 9 Division therefore placed Colonel K K Afridi, the Division's Colonel Staff as commander of both the battalions at Kaliganj and ordered 49, 55 Field Regiments and 211 Mortar Battery to send two guns/mortars each to Kaliganj to form an Adhoc battery for the support of Afridi force.

Oblivious of the road block, Brig Manzur ordered 18 Punjab to reach Jehnida on 6 December. 18 Punjab was fired upon near Uttar Narayanpur, a small village a few kilometres west of Jhenida. Brig Manzur ordered 18 Punjab to clear the road block. After a half-hearted attempt, the attack was called off and all including 29 Baloch were ordered to withdraw to Kushtia.[109]

Two troops of tanks and 9 Dogra from 41 Brigade contacted Jhenida at 9 am and secured it by 1 pm on 7 December. Meanwhile 62 Brigade left Kotchandpur at last light on 5 December, advanced towards Kaliganj and secured it by the morning of 7 December.[110] 50 Baloch and troops from 38 FF defending Kaliganj withdrew towards Maghura along with the adhoc battery. On orders of HQ 57 Brigade, 18 Punjab, 49 Field Regiment less a battery and troop of 211 Mortar Battery commenced their move towards Kushtia along Chaudanga-Kushtia railway track on the night of 6-7 December. By midday 8 December they reached Kushtia where 29 Baloch and a battery had already withdrawn.

HQ 9 Pakistani Division had moved to Maghura on 4

December. With the loss of Jessore on 6 December and Jhenida on 7 December, Maj Gen Ansari knew that his HQ was exposed to an imminent threat. By evening 7 December, he ordered Division HQ to move to Faridpur across river Madhumati. Colonel Afridi the Col Staff was ordered to delay enemy advance with his adhoc force and deny the ferry sites across Madhumati but without risking his force.[111]

62 Brigade was allotted a squadron less two troops of tanks and a motorized company on 7 December and ordered to head for Maghura. It captured Maghura by 4 pm on 8 December.[112] By that time HQ Pakistani 9 Division had moved to Faridpur and Colonel Afridi's force had withdrawn to Maduakhali, east of river.[113]

Brig Manzur having lost Jhenida, began organising defence of Kushtia with 57 Brigade. 18 Punjab was to guard approaches from Jhenida and 29 Baloch was to prevent the enemy from reaching Harding Bridge.[114]

On night 7-8 December, GOC 9 Indian Division asked 2 Corps Commander to release him 7 Brigade for speedy operations against Kushtia and Hardinge Bridge. 7 Brigade less Naga battalion was ordered to concentrate at Jhenida before midnight on 8 December. 7 Brigade was ordered to capture Jhenida and Hardinge Bridge at the earliest. It was allotted 5 Guards as its third battalion, two troops of tanks and a troop of medium artillery. On 9 December, advance by 7 Brigade commenced from Jhenida at 6:30 am. The advance was led by two troops of tanks and followed by 22 Rajputs in military transport. They reached out-skirts of Jhenida at 2 pm and debussed. A Mujahid platoon at Battail (south of Kushtia) fell back to Kushtia when they saw the Indian tanks approaching at a distance. They informed 18 Punjab about approaching Indian army. Immediately Brigade Headquarters was also informed. All troops in the area were alerted and a troop tanks was ordered to move to the area. The leading company of 22 Rajputs moving behind six tanks reached almost the centre of Kushtia at about 2:45 pm.[115] Pakistani infantry, troop tanks and

the artillery battery opened fire on the Indian exposed tanks and infantry.[116] Only the last out of six tanks escaped destruction. It was captured in running condition. The vanguard company suffered heavy casualties.[117] "One hundred and eleven Rajput soldiers including six officers were killed."[118] 22 Rajput panicked and fell back in disarray. Indian artillery at this juncture came to their rescue and engaged Pakistani troops. It was by 5 pm that the situation was stabilised along the canal, though groups of Rajputs kept trickling back till the next morning.[119] Even in their worst time, Pakistani troops proved that properly led, they could inflict heavy casualties on a much stronger enemy. Shock waves from this unexpected debacle travelled up to Indian HQ 2 Corps. The Indian Corps Commander thought that Pakistani 57 Brigade may exploit the situation and launch a local counter offensive. He therefore instructed HQ 4 Division to leave one infantry battalion along Madhumati to contain Pakistan army and capture Kushtia and clear area up to Hardinge Bridge with the rest of the division.[120] Like 9 Indian Division, 4 Division also got diverted away from the strategic direction of Dacca. Kushtia had hardly any strategic value. Indian 2 Corps instead of going for the centre of gravity of East Pakistan, preferred to chase ghosts. On night 10-11 December, 57 Brigade decided to withdraw to 16 Division area across Hardinge Bridge on river Ganges.[121] GOC 4 Division decided to attack Kushtia with two brigades. 7 Brigade was tasked to attack Kushtia from the south and 41 Brigade from the west. 62 Brigade was kept in reserve.[122] On 10 and 11 December, IAF was used to bomb and strafe Kushtia. Indian artillery kept up intermittent shelling.[123] On 11 December, 57 Brigade started crossing the river to its north side.

4 Indian Division started clearing Kushtia at 12 am on 11 December. They met no resistance as 57 Brigade had already pulled out of the city. Kushtia was cleared by 5 pm. 41 Brigade started advancing towards Hardinge Bridge on 12 December and secured the southern bank by late afternoon the same day.[124] Immediately, GOC 4 Division ordered his division less 41 Brigade

to move to Magura. By mid-day 14 December, 7 and 62 Brigades and most of the artillery had reached Magura. The adhoc force under Colonel Afridi consisting of 38 FF, 50 Baloch and an adhoc battery were holding eastern bank of river Madhumati from Duman to Komarpur. HQ 4 Division ordered 62 Brigade to cross Madhumati north of Duman and 7 Brigade to cross the river two kilometres south of Komarpur on night 14-15 December. Both the brigades crossed the river as planned and started moving inwards towards road Magura- Faridpur on 15 December.

At about 10 am, GOC 4 Division ordered 7 and 62 Brigades to establish road blocks supported by tanks, east of Pakistani troops in general area northeast of Gopaldi. 7 Brigade tasked 22 Rajputs to establish the road block.[125] The unit established the road block by 11 am on 15 December.[126] The gun position was attacked by Indian tanks around 4 pm. Two mortars and two 3.7-inch howitzers were overrun.[127]

By midday Colonel Afridi came to know about the two flanking manoeuvres and establishment of road blocks in his rear. He ordered both the battalions to exfiltrate through Indian troops after last light and take up defences a few kilometres west of Faridpur the next day i.e., 16 December. Forward companies started thinning out at 6:30 pm 15 December. Following inconspicuous tracks and in small groups, bulk of the troops managed to evade the blocking Indian battalions. However approximately 190 bumped into Indian troops and were made prisoners. Another hundred including the SSG section under Captain Asif decided to break out of Indian road block. At 6:30 pm Captain Asif and Captain Mumtaz (From 49 Field Regiment) led a violent assault against 22 Rajput besieging their position. About half of them were killed. Those who broke out, reached Faridpur on 16 December along with the other exfiltrating troops of the two battalions only to find that Pakistan army had laid down their arms.[128]

9 Pakistan Division failed to exercise effective control over its

troops. After launching a futile counter-attack on 21 November in Gharibpur area Division HQ did not take any other major decision. Thereafter, apparently 57 and 107 Brigades fought independent battles. Division HQ did not recreate division reserves from less threatened sectors. Division HQ should have designed the battle in a manner that they retained control over the brigades, withdrew them in time to Jessore and Jhenida and thereafter across Madhumati. At the brigade level, 107 Brigade was slow in reading the battle. Indians had shown their hand by 27 November that they were using northern approach to Jessore. Thereafter keeping 22 FF, 15 FF and two field batteries out of battle and not withdrawing bulk of this force to the point of decision i.e., Jessore was a big mistake. Withdrawing to Khulna and not to Maghura was another strategic mistake. 57 Brigade remained obsessed with threat to Hardinge Bridge and failed to adjust defences to a strong Indian offensive emanating along Darshana-Kotchandpur approach. Out of more than twelve infantry companies (29 Baloch, 18 Punjab and 50 Baloch), the most critical battles were lost at Darshana and Uthalai by employing only two companies of 18 Punjab and a company of 29 Baloch. Bulk of the brigade remained LOB (Left out of battle). It was a mistake not to withdraw some troops from 29 Baloch and hold Jhenida before 4 December. However, commanding officers, unit officers and troops exhibited professionalism, devotion and extreme courage. They kept inflicting heavy casualties on the enemy till the last day.

NORTH-WESTERN SECTOR

This sector was bounded by River Ganges in the south, River Jamuna in the east and international border in the west. 16 Division (Pakistan) comprising 23, 34 and 205 Infantry Brigades was responsible for the defence of this sector. 16 adhoc Brigade was located at Rajshahi but had been moved to Dacca before the war. Division HQ was located at Bogra. 23 Brigade located at Rangpur was defending area north of line Dinajpur- Rangpur with four infantry battalions (8 Punjab, 25 Punjab, 48 Punjab and 26

FF), 34 Punjab (R&S) less a Company, squadron armour of 29 Cavalry and 48 Field Regiment.[129] 205 Brigade located at Bogra was defending area south of 23 Brigade up to line Bogra- Naogoan with three infantry battalions (8 Baloch, 4 FF and 13 FF), one troop of M 24 Chafee tanks and 80 Field Regiment.[130] 34 Brigade located at Rajshahi was defending Malda-Nawabganj- Rajshahi approach. It comprised of 32 Punjab, 32 Baloch and 117 Mortar Battery.[131] One of its unit i.e., 12 Punjab was moved to 9 Division on 22 November.[132] By end November, the brigade was moved to Rangpur.

33 Indian Corps was employed for offensive in this sector. The Corps consisted of 20 and 6 Mountain Divisions, 340 Mountain Brigade, 471 Engineer Brigade,[133] 3 Armoured Brigade and an additional infantry brigade.[134] Commander 33 Corps based his offensive plan on three strategic compulsions. First, provide additional protection to Siliguri corridor by eliminating Pachagarh, Nageshwari and Patgram salients.[135] Second, take advantage of the narrow waist of this sector at Hilli-Gaibanda and cut the sector in two halves.[136] Third, protect Farrakha barrage and base of operation of troops to be employed on Hilli approach by strongly holding Malda sub-sector.[137] Keeping the main task of destruction of Pakistani troops and the three strategic compulsions in mind, Indian Eastern Command tasked 33 Corps to eliminate the three Pakistani salients threatening Siliguri corridor in preliminary operations. 33 Corps planned to launch its Main effort by 20 Division plus additional troops from Balurghat salient along axis Hilli- Palasbari- Gaibanda with a view to cut North-western sector in two halves and defeat 16 Pakistani Division in detail. 6 Mountain Division was tasked to launch secondary effort from the north along Pachagarh- Dinajpur axis and to eliminate Patgram and Nageshwari salient up to river Tiesta with a view to providing protection to Siliguri corridor and fix 23 Brigade. Task of secondary effort was given to 6 Mountain Division by 33 Corps. 71 Brigade of 6 Mountain Division was tasked to capture Pachagarh salient and then advance along Pachagarh- Thakurgaon

axis and capture Dinajpur if possible. 9 Brigade of 6 Mountain Division was tasked to capture Nageshwari and Patgram salients and later exploit further towards river Tiesta. 20 Division with 340 Brigade under command was tasked to cut North-western sector in half by employing 202 Brigade along Hilli- Ghoraghat-Palasbari, 66 Brigade along Samjia- Charkai- Pirganj- Gaibanda and 340 Brigade to contain Dinajpur and be available as reserves. 165 Brigade of 20 Division was to defend Balurghat and Malda sub-sectors.[138]

In 23 Brigade area, 8 Punjab was located at Lalmonirhat. Two companies of 25 Punjab, each supported with two artillery guns were deployed in Patgram and Nageshwari salients. 25 Punjab less two companies moved to Saidpur on 3 December. One platoon from these two companies was at Thakurgaon under 34 Punjab.[139] 48 Punjab less two companies was located at Domar. Two field guns and a troop of tanks were in support of 48 Punjab. Third company was at Pachagarh under 34 Punjab. Fourth company was at Saidpur as brigade reserves. 26 FF was guarding approaches leading to Dinajpur with three companies and its fourth company was at Phulbari. 34 Punjab less a company was at Thakurgoan. To provide fire support to these troops, 48 Field Regiment was reorganised into six instead of three batteries.

As per strategic compulsion number one, i.e., to safeguard Siliguri corridor, 71 Indian Brigade occupied salient north of Pachagarh on night 31 October-1 November 71 as it was virtually not defended. Territory north of Pachagarh was lost well before the war stated.[140] It was a blatant violation of international law and violation of Pakistan's international border. India lied that its troops were not involved and all these gains were by Mukti Bahaini. The world kept quiet.

Nageshwari salient was defended by one company of 25 Punjab located at Barangamari. On night 13-14 November an Indian battalion attacked this company. After resisting for two days, the company withdrew under pressure on 15 November.

Pakistani Eastern Command ordered 23 Brigade to recapture the lost territory. Two companies each of 8, 25 Punjab and one Mujahid battalion under Lt Col Sarfraz Malik were tasked for the counter attack. The attack never materialized but the force took up defences at Nageshwari.[141]

India launched main offensive all along East Pakistan border on night 20- 21 November without formal declaration of war. Immediately Brigadier Naeem along with bulk of Headquarters 34 Brigade was ordered to move to Rangpur and assume command of all troops i.e., 8 Punjab, two companies 25 Punjab and troops EPCAF etc.[142] Patgram salient was being defended by a company of 25 Punjab. On night 21-22 November at 9 pm, Indians attacked the company. The fire of infantry and artillery forced the enemy to withdraw leaving five dead bodies. On 22 November the infantry company was ordered to withdraw to Hathibanda. Here they were reinforced with a company of 8 Punjab. Hathibanda was attacked on 4 December. The two companies kept the enemy at bay for 24 hours before withdrawing towards Rangpur. En-route they were ambushed. They broke out of ambush and reached Rangpur the next morning.[143] Nageshwari being defended by one company of 8 Punjab and two companies of 25 Punjab was attacked on the first night of the war by 4 Rajput. The attack was repulsed by Infantry and artillery fire.[144] Again on night 29-30 November, 4 Rajputs attacked the main defences at Nageshwari. On 30 November, the force at Nageshwari was withdrawn. Company 8 Punjab was ordered to join 34 Punjab at Thakurgaon. Lalmonirhat and Kurigram were attacked on 5 December. On 7 December, all Pakistani troops withdrew west of River Tista.

71 Indian Brigade was in contact will the defences of Pachagarh since 1 November. It attacked Pachagarh on night 19-20 November. Pachagarh was being defended by a company of 48 Punjab. Despite being surrounded from almost three sides by three infantry battalions, the defending company held onto Pachagarh with the help of artillery fire till night 26-27 November. The artillery battery withdrew to Thakurgaon through a delaying

position at Boda manned by troops of 34 Punjab. Company 48 Punjab withdrew to Khansama. 12 Rajputana Rifles and a squadron of 69 Armoured Regiment of 71 Brigade secured Boda on 30 November.[145]



Map 17.

Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

Thakurgaon defences were contacted on 2 December. It was being defended by 34 Punjab less a company, a company of 8 Punjab, a platoon of 25 Punjab and supported by a battery of 48 Field Regiment. Indian 71 Brigade commander tried to establish

a road block south of Thakurgaon with a company of 7 MLI. Pakistani troops at Thakurgaon were ordered to withdraw to Birganj on night 3-4 December. Thakurgaon was secured by Indians on 4 December.[146] The same day Brigadier Ansari was replaced with Brigadier Shafi to command 23 Brigade.[147]

Birganj was attacked by 7 MLI on night 6-7 December. The attack failed and 7 MLI lost its CO Adjutant, artillery observer and 70 troops. Birganj remained with 34 Punjab.[148] Having failed to capture Birganj, 71 Brigade Commander decided to go for Dinajpur instead. Two companies of 12 Raj Rifles were sent to occupy Dinajpur on 9 December. They contacted Dinajpur defences at first light 10 December. Dinajpur was being defended by three companies of 26 FF, a troop of tanks and EPCAF troops. They were being supported by four guns of 48 Field Regiment. Indians had tried to capture Dinajpur from the south since 20-21 November when BSF attacked but failed to capture Bantara BOP. On 4 December, 4 Madras captured a platoon position at Ramsagar. A quick counter attack by a company of 26 FF threw them out on 6 December. Attack at Birol on 7 December also failed. Two companies of 12 Raj Rifles which reached north of Dinajpur on 10 December were ambushed by Capt. Shabbir of 26 FF.[149] Five Indian soldiers were captured and the rest withdrew northward in small parties.[150] After the setback at Dinajpur, commander 71 Brigade decided on 10 December to abandon plan to capture Dinajpur and head for Saidpur. It made a lot of tactical sense.[151]

71 Brigade ordered 21 Raj Rifles to cross River Dhepa near Khansama. The unit managed to establish a bridgehead across Dhepa on 14 December. 48 Punjab was ordered to take up defences at Darwani cross roads to stop 71 Indian Brigade advance towards Saidpur. On 15 December, 5 Grenadiers resumed advance towards Saidpur and contacted 48 Punjab less a company at Darwani by last light. At this time, Commander 23 Brigade ordered 26 FF at Dinajpur to immediately withdraw to east of Atrai River because of the threat developing in the north. They

reached east of Atrai River on 16 December, the day war ended in the Eastern Theatre.[152]

205 Brigade under Brig Tajammal was guarding the shortest approach emanating from Balurghat salient. 205 Brigade had three infantry battalions. 4 FF was defending Hilli-Ghoraghat approach. Its Delta Company under Maj Peter (Retired as Maj Gen) was deployed at Hilli. Charlie Company under Maj Akram was defending Charkai. Alpha and Bravo companies were at Maheshpur.[153] 8 Baloch was deployed south of 4 FF with battalion HQ at Joypurhat. 13 FF was defending Balurghat- Patnitola approach.

Indian Eastern Command had tasked 20 Mountain Division to adopt Hilli- Palasbari approach being the shortest. However, Commander 33 Corps and GOC 20 Mountain Division had reservations about this approach. It being the most expected, direct and therefore strongly defended. Orders of Eastern Command prevailed over their objections.[154] 8 Guards of 202 Brigade of 20 Division attacked Delta Company of 4 FF on night 23-24 November. The battle raged throughout the night. The attack was repulsed. 8 Guards lost 139 persons.[155] Just before dawn, commander 202 Brigade launched 5 Garhwals which also failed to capture the objective, but consoled them self by occupying Basudepur which was a few huts almost on the international border. On 25 November, 8 Guards probed east wards and finding village Bara Chingram vacant, occupied it. On orders of Brigadier Tajammal, 4 FF launched a quick counter attack at 4:30 am on 26 November to evict Indians from Bara Chingram and Naopara. They recaptured Bara Chingram but Naopara could not be cleared due to tank and artillery fire.[156] 202 Indian Brigade kept trying to create a dent in the defences of 4 FF around Hilli for ten days but failed to break the spirit of the defenders. In these attacks 5 Garhwal lost 65 men, 4 JCOs and 4 officers.[157]

As a result of the bitter struggle, loss of time and heavy casualties at Hilli, Indian Eastern Command agreed to revise their

plans. It was decided that 66 and 202 Brigades should be launched along Charkai- Nawabganj- Pirganj and Charkai- Bahaduria-Ghoraghat axis respectively, to cut the waist line at Gaibanda and Gobindganj.[158]

66 Brigade's offensive led by 20 MLI, started from Samjia and contacted Phulbari on 1 December. It was being defended by a company of 26 FF.[159] 20 MLI captured Phulbari on 5 December.[160] Company 26 FF withdrew to Dinajpur.

To meet the new threat emerging in the north, Brig Tajammal placed two companies of 8 Baloch and one company of 13 FF at Bahaduria along with the depth company of 4 FF on 5 December. This position was to block any Indian advance towards Ghoraghat. A screen of two platoons was deployed ahead of the defences to further delay the Indians.[161] Brig Tajammal was rightly shifting the centre of gravity of his defences towards north.

To open lines of communications, Hilli had to be captured by the Indians. Therefore, on 5 December, 202 Brigade was ordered to breakout towards advancing 66 Brigade. C Company 4 FF once again came under repeated attacks. During the battle, C Company lost all its RRs to enemy tanks. Indians therefore brought their tanks at a distance of 500 yards and started picking up bunkers of left forward platoon. Major Akram, the company commander took a 40 mm Chinese RL and crawled to a clump of trees barely 100 yards from the enemy tanks. He destroyed three tanks while constantly changing his position. When he was aiming for the fourth tank, he was shot through his throat by the tank machine gun. He stood his ground till the end. For his exemplary bravery, he was awarded country's highest military award, Nishan-e-Haider. Meanwhile Indian 69 Armoured Regiment contacted C Company from the rear. Threatened from the rear, C Company was pulled east to Boaldar.[162]



Map 18.

Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

On 4 December, GOC 20 Division decided to concentrate as many troops as was possible in Charkai- Nawabganj area to make a drive towards Pirganj and Ghoraghat. By morning 6 December, he had concentrated 66 Brigade, 340 Brigade with two battalions, 69 Armoured Regiment, 63 Cavalry less a squadron, two artillery regiments, one medium regiment less a battery, two light batteries and two engineer regiments.[163] While these troops were concentrating, 5 Garhwals secured Nawabganj. On morning of 6 December, patrols were sent to Kanchdaha and Hathbangi fords. They reported that track to Kanchdaha was suitable and not occupied. Immediately the ford was secured unopposed and a

bridgehead established across Karatoya by last light 6 December.[164] 340 Brigade along with 5 Garhwals, artillery, armour and engineers built into the bridgehead and broke out at midday 7 December. Advance was led by a squadron of T 55 tanks. It was followed by a squadron of PT 76 tanks which lifted an infantry battalion. Medium guns provided fire support. By 5 pm, 69 Armoured Regiment had cut road Rangpur- Pirganj.

HQ 16 Division was ignorant about this Indian advance. At this time Maj Gen Nazar Hussain the GOC 16 Pakistani Division and Brig Tajammal were moving by road from Rangpur to Bogra. About two kilometres north of Pirganj they were fired at by the Indian tanks. The two commanders jumped into a ditch and managed to escape to Rangpur on foot. Brig Tajammal drove cross country through enemy held area and reached his brigade HQ the same night.[165] Maj Gen Nazar remained at Rangpur till 9 December.

Brigadier Naeem, Commander 34 Brigade, received the news of ambush of his GOC some two hours later i.e., around 7 pm on 7 December. He being the senior most officer in the Division, ordered two rescue forces, one each from the north and south. The northern force comprised of two companies each of 8 and 25 Punjab and two troops of 29 Cavalry under Lt Col Salim Zia, CO 8 Punjab.[166] They contacted Indian tanks north of Pirganj. Indian T 55's could fight at night while M 24 did not have this capability. Brigadier Naeem ordered Lt Col Zia Salim to take defence at mile stone 18 on Rangpur-Pirganj road. 20 Indian Division was interested in developing operations from Pirganj towards Bogra and not towards Rangpur. Therefore, the Salim force at MS 18 did not see much fighting till 13 December.[167]

The southern rescue force consisted of 32 Baloch under Lt Col Sultan. It was rushed north from Bogra. 32 Baloch expected to meet the enemy at Pirganj. Unknown to them, Indian 2/5 GR with a squadron of tanks was holding a position almost in the middle of Palasbari and Pirganj. At 4:00 am 8 December, Colonel Sultan

leading his troops from the front bumped into 2/5 GR. Both sides were surprised. Colonel Sultan followed by his troops charged at the enemy. It resulted in hand-to-hand combat. Colonel Sultan embraced Shahadat. Judging the enemy strength, the three companies of 32 Baloch withdrew to Gobindganj just south of Karatoya River. In this engagement 32 Baloch lost 7 persons while 30 were injured.[168]

Due to success in capturing of Pirganj, GOC 20 Division revised his plan on 8 December. 340 Brigade was ordered to advance south of Pirganj, capture Gobindgarh and then head for Bogra. 66 Brigade was tasked to advance south from Nawabganj and after capturing Bahaduria and Ghoraghat link up with 340 Brigade at Gobindgarh. 202 Brigade was tasked to capture Hilli, link up with 66 Brigade at Ghoraghat and then advance to Bogra via Khetlal.

Immediately on receipt of new orders on 8 December, commander 66 Brigade nominated 17 Kumaon with 63 Cavalry less two squadrons, a mountain regiment, one battery of medium regiment and one heavy mortar battery to capture Bahaduria.[169] Around 4 pm, 8 December, 66 Brigade started shelling Bahaduria position. The attack by 63 Cavalry managed to overrun the screen position and the company of 13 FF. Maj Sabir Kamal, the Company Commander, lost his life in this Indian attack. The Indian armour however failed to overcome resistance by Company 8 Baloch deployed in the depth. Another attack on 9 December was also beaten back. GOC 20 Division realized the important part played by the two artillery batteries deployed in area Mahespur in the defence of Bahaduria and Hilli. He ordered 4 Madras and 63 Cavalry to raid the Pakistani guns. Artillery support of all Indian artillery in the area was made available to the raiding group. Through gaps in Pakistani defences, the raiding group moved on night 9-10 December towards Mahespur. They managed to surprise Pakistani guns and troops at Mahespur around first light 10 December. Indian tanks of 63 Cavalry destroyed many vehicles and damaged two guns also. HQ 205

Brigade, located near the guns, escaped detection by enemy tanks. As it was a raid, therefore Indian troops withdrew after some time.

340 Brigade, after capturing Pirganj on 7 December regrouped on 8 December. An infantry battalion plus and some armour supported by artillery was left at Pirganj. On 9 December, 69 Armoured Regiment less a squadron, one squadron 63 Cavalry and 6 Guards led the advance to Palasbari, which was captured by midday. Gobindganj was contacted on 10 December. While Pakistani troops at Hilli and Bahaduria were still stubbornly resisting attacks of 202 and 66 Brigades on 10 December, loss of Palasbari well in their rear was a big tactical blow to 205 Brigade.

During night 10-11 December, Brigadier Tajammal analysed the effect of Indian 340 Brigade reaching Gobindganj. Bulk of his brigade was at Bahaduria, Hilli and Joypurhat. Indian 340 Brigade was threatening Bogra. There was no tactical sense in defending forward localities when the brigade critical area i.e., Bogra had become vulnerable. At 3:00 am 11 December, brigade headquarters ordered 4 FF, 8 Baloch and all troops at Bahaduria to withdraw to Khetlal.

Bahaduria was secured by 17 Kumaon by noon on 11 December after it was vacated by Pakistani troops.[170] 17 Kumaon lost 132 killed and wounded including 5 officers and 4 JCOs. It was one of the bloodiest battles fought in East Pakistan.[171] 66 Brigade linked up with 340 Brigade at Ghoraghat by first light on 12 December.[172]

32 Baloch with a company of 32 Punjab established a defensive position at Gobindganj on 8 December.[173] The defences were taken on the southern banks of river Karatoya just north of Gobindganj. 340 Brigade contacted Pakistani defences along the river on 10 December. To avoid casualties, frontal assault across the river was ruled out. Mukti Bahaini informed the Indians about an unguarded ford at Kajla, eight kilometres east of Gobindganj. On 11 December, 69 Armoured Regiment less a squadron, two troops of 63 Cavalry and 5/11 GR crossed the unguarded ford and

cut the road south of Gobindganj by 3 pm.[174] Defences at Gobindganj had been hurriedly occupied by troops who lacked proper command arrangements and artillery support. Once bypassed, they had no choice but to ex-filtrate in small parties towards Mahastan. Brigadier Tajammal ordered 32 Baloch to take defences ahead of the river Ichhamati. During the night 12-13 December, one company of 5/11 GR guided by Mukti Bahaini, took a detour from the east and established a blocking position in the rear of 32 Baloch defences. Due to the dire situation and being low on ammunition, 32 Baloch withdrew in small parties towards Bogra avoiding the road which was held by the enemy. By evening 13 December, 32 Baloch was reassembled at Bogra.

Now going back to the operations of 202 Brigade. As per GOC 20 Division's orders of 8 December, 202 Brigade commenced its attack on Hilli on 9 December. At this time 202 Brigade consisted of 22 MLI, 4 Rajputs and 8 Guards. Despite all odds favouring 202 Brigade, Delta company 4 FF, held onto its defences.[175] It was not the three battalions of 202 Brigade but the loss of Palasbari on 9 December and 340 Brigade's contacting Gobindganj defences on 10 December which forced Brig Tajammal to order withdrawal of his troops on night 10-11 December. 202 Brigade's moves were unencumbered on 11 December after the withdrawal of 205 Pakistani Brigade and therefore reached Ghoraghat by midnight the same day. The brigade resumed advance to Bogra via Khetlal at first light 12 December and reached Khetlal by midday 12 December. Emboldened by Pakistani withdrawal, Indian 165 Brigade was ordered to advance from Malda and capture Nawabganj, which it did on 12 December.[176]

By 12 December, 205 Brigade with 32 Baloch under command was in Bogra. By 14 December, 205 Brigade was ready to fight another battle in Bogra.[177]

340 Brigade contacted main defences of Bogra on 13 December and launched a combat group consisting of 69 Armoured Regiment and 6 Guards from the east of Bogra once

again assisted by Mukti Bahaini to find an unguarded area to cut both roads south of Bogra. 340 Brigade attacked Bogra from all sides on 15 December. Fighting was continuing on 16 December when orders for surrender were received by Pakistani troops. Brig Tajammal tried to escape to Naogaon, but was captured en-route.[178] Some troops of 80 Field Regiment refused to surrender and died fighting Indian army.[179]

On 14 December, 202 and 66 Brigades were moved north to capture Rangpur. On 15 December, advance led by 66 Brigade commenced in the morning. At MS 18, two companies of 25 Punjab with two companies of 8 Punjab in the depth were deployed under Lt Col Salim Zia. Once Indian tanks tried to out flank the position, Pakistani troops withdrew to north of Ghagat River. 66 Brigade contacted Ghagat River by last light 15 November. After clearance of MS 18, 202 Brigade was ordered to advance on the track running west of the road. While both the brigades were probing for places to cross the river, termination of hostilities was announced by midday 16 December.[180]

Despite overwhelming superiority in all components of combat power, especially in fire power, Indians took 25 days to drive a wedge in the defences of 16 Division. The three brigades of Pakistan army still had some fight left in them on 16 December when they were ordered to surrender. Indians wasted precious 9 days trying to capture Hilli. It took them so many days to change their plans. In no way could Indian offensive be called a lightening campaign or blitzkrieg. It was more of a road roller which moved due to its sheer weight.

HQ 16 Pakistani Division did not effectively control the battle. Only major decision taken at Division HQ was shifting of HQ 34 Brigade to Rangpur. Throughout the war there were no uncommitted division reserves. Without reserves HQ could not influence the battle. One fails to see any design of battle at divisional level. However, the biggest mistake was failure to read the battle and timely identify enemy's main effort. Indian attacks

at Hilli and capturing of Phulbari on 5 December should have alerted HQ 16 Division to the threat developing to Pirganj. Brig Tajammal rightly identified the threat and shifted two companies and four artillery guns to Bahaduria on 3-4 December. The enemy against which Brig Tajammal was taking safeguards was also posing threat to Pirganj. Primarily the problem was a faulty design of the battle by HQ Pakistani Eastern Command under Lt Gen Niazi. There was too much fixation with holding the ground than to prolong and make the war costly for the Indians to force them to agree to a political solution.

As far as fighting quality, training and motivation were concerned, 4 FF at Hilli and Charkai and company 8 Baloch at Bahaduria proved that given the environment, Pakistan Army was second to none.

NORTH EASTERN SECTOR

The North Eastern Sector stretched from Sylhet in the north to Salda Nadi north of Comilla, a frontage of more than 320 kilometres. 14 Infantry Division comprising 27, 202 and 313 Brigades was responsible for defence of this sector. Its GOC was Maj Gen Qazi Abdul Majeed. 202 was an adhoc Brigade with one and a half infantry battalion, 313 Brigade had two infantry battalions and 27 Brigade had two and a half infantry battalions. Thus, the Division had only six instead of usual nine infantry battalions. One field regiment and one mortar battery comprised the divisional artillery. A depleted armour squadron with only four running tanks provided armoured support. It was an apology of an Infantry Division. Civil Armed Forces (CAF) troops filled the inevitable gaps in the defences.

8 and 57 Infantry Divisions from Indian 4 Corps operated against 14 Pakistan division. 8 Division was tasked to contain Charkai and capture Shamshernagar airfield and then secure the ferries at Saidpur and Sherpur. It was to capture Sylhet if possible. 57 Division was to capture Akhaura and contain Brahminbaria area. It was to capture Daudkandi in phase two and Chittagong in

phase three.[181]

202 Adhoc Brigade under Brigadier Saleemullah, an artillery officer, was responsible for defence of over hundred miles front from Sunamganj, Jantiapur to Sholapur ferry. It consisted of 31 Punjab, two infantry companies of 12 AK, one mujahid battalion, two companies of Khyber Rifles and one company of Thal Scouts. It was supported by a field battery of 31 Field Regiment equipped with 105 mm Howitzers.[182] The brigade had to defend four approaches. Sunamganj-Sylhet approach was the responsibility of Akram Force comprising company Khyber Rifles, company Thal Scouts and a company of EPCAF. One company of 12 AK was deployed to cover Chattak-Sylhet approach. One company of 31 Punjab with some Razakars was responsible for Jantiapur-Sylhet approach. On this approach, one company of 12 AK was deployed at Hemu. 31 Punjab less two companies was responsible for Zakirganj-Charkai approach. Brigade reserves consisted of three companies of EPCAF located at Sylhet.

313 Brigade under Brig Iftikhar Rana had its HQ at Maulvi Bazar. The Brigade was responsible for area from area Latu to River Titas. It consisted of 22 Baloch, 30 FF and one Wing FC less two companies. 22 Baloch was defending Kulaura-Fenchuganj and Shamshernagar- Maulvi Bazar approaches. 30 FF was defending Srimangal-Maulvi Bazar-Sylhet and Teliapara-Shaistaganj-Sylhet approaches. Fenchuganj and Sherpur ferries were held by Mujahids.

The area being defended by 202 and 313 Brigades was attacked by Indian 8 Division having two infantry brigades, E Sector (One infantry battalion, one BSF battalion, one artillery battery and one troop of mortars under an Indian brigadier) and an East Bengal (EB) Brigade under Col Zia ur Rehman having 1, 8 EB battalions and an artillery battery. 59 and 81 Brigades were tasked to advance along Kulaura- Fenchuganj and Shamshernagar- Maulvi Bazar axis respectively. E Sector was tasked to advance along the Jantiapur axis to Sylhet. EB Brigade and BSF were tasked to

contain Pakistani troops along Charkai approach.[183] The attack commenced on night 28-29 November.[184] 81 Brigade attacked Chatlapur and Bagichara, east of Shamshernagar on night 28-29 November. Chatlapur was cleared by midday on 30 November by 10 Mahar. Indian 3 Punjab secured Bagichara the same day. A company of 4 Kumaon established a road block two kilometres north of Shamshernagar after first light 30 November. Brig Iftikhar Rana was on his way to Shamshernagar from Maulvi Bazar to visit forward troops. The leading jeep was fired at by the Indian road blocking company. Brigade Commander turned back. Soon two mortars and a platoon of 22 Baloch reached the area.[185] 4 Kumaon company withdrew after suffering casualties. Shamshernagar was secured by 4 Kumaon on 2 December.

On Kulaura approach, 59 Brigade commenced its advance and contacted Pakistani troops at Ghazipur tea gardens on 3 December. The position was being defended by a company of 22 Baloch, Mahsud scouts and EPCAF. First attack by 6 Rajputs on night 3-4 December failed. Second attack by 4/5 Gorkha on night 4-5 December also failed. However, 4/5 Gorkha managed to clear the position during night 5-6 December after fierce fighting.[186] While operations in Ghazipur area were proceeding, an Indian battalion attacked Kapnapahar being defended by troops of 22 Baloch. After meeting stiff resistance, Indians managed to establish a road block by two companies behind Pakistani position before first light on 4 December. Maj Aziz of 22 Baloch led a counter attack against the blocking position but failed to dislodge it. Kapnapahar was secured by Indians by midday on 4 December. 4/5 GR after capture of Ghazipur advanced to Kulaura and secured it by mid-day 6 December. Battle for Kulaura had seriously impaired 22 Baloch and exposed Fenchuganj approach. 6 Rajputs secured Brahman Bazar on 6 December.[187]

After capture of Shamshernagar on 2 December, 3 Punjab commenced advance and contacted Munshi Bazar. It was being defended by a company of 30 FF and some EPCAF elements

under Capt. Khusro. Indian 3 Punjab attacked the position at first light 5 December.



Map 19.

Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

After bitter day long battle in which Capt. Khusro lost his life, Indians captured it by last light the same day.[188] Further advance by Indian 3 Punjab was held at Dhalai river ferries north of Munshi Bazar. These positions were held by another company of 30 FF and some EPCAF troops. The position was attacked on night 5-6 December by 3 Punjab and cleared by first light 6 December. Thereafter 10 Mahar resumed advance towards Maulvi Bazar after last light 6 December and contacted 30 FF Defences in Maulvi Bazar on 7 December.[189]

On 6 December, Indian HQ 4 Corps ordered 8 Division to move 59 Brigade to Agartala to reinforce 57 Division to capture Ashuganj. After handing over Kulaura and Brahman Bazar to BSF, 59 Brigade moved to Agartala.

After 6 December, events in 202 Brigade started having effect on operations of 8 Indian and 313 Pakistani Brigade. E Sector had been tasked to develop threat along Jantiapur- Sylhet approach. BSF and EB Brigade operating on Karimganj- Charkai axis were tasked to contain Pakistani troops in Charkai.[190] Both these efforts were aimed at fixing 202 Brigade so that it could not move south, thus facilitating the operations of 8 Division.

Before the start of war on 21 November, Indian Army and Mukti Bahaini had already captured several Pakistani border posts.[191] On 21 November, Indians attacked Atgram/ Kainatghat. The Pakistani company commander was killed and the two companies withdrew. GOC 14 Division ordered 31 Punjab to counter attack the lost position. The counter attack on night 27-28 November failed and 31 Punjab less two companies fell back to Charkai. The enemy tried to overrun Charkai but Pakistani troops held onto the position till 12 December.[192]



Map 20.

Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

E Sector (Brigade sized formation) operating along Jantiapur approach had managed to move up to river Sari about six

kilometres south of Jantiapur by 7 December.[193] Their advance had strongly been contested by a company of 31 Punjab.

On 7 December, E Sector was six kilometres south of Jantiapur, EB Brigade and BSF were in contact with Charkai position and 81 Brigade was in contact with 313 Brigade at Maulvi Bazar. Kulaura and Brahman Bazar were held by BSF and 59 Brigade was moving to Agartala. It was in these circumstances that Commander Indian 4 Corps decided to heli-lift 4/5 GR near Sylhet on the evening of 7 December. The aim was to capture Sylhet before withdrawing Pakistani troops turn it into a fortress and also to facilitate the advance of E Sector, which was tasked to link up with 4/5 GR within 48 hours. The landing site was two kilometres east from Railway Bridge at Sylhet. Their task was to capture the bridge, radio station and airfield. Heli-lift started at 2:30 pm and by 4 pm, 7 December, more than a company was in position. Commander 202 brigade reacted with his brigade reserves of a company of Khyber rifles and some troops of EPCAF. One gun from Jantiapur approach was pulled back to engage the heli landed enemy. The second phase of landing started at 3 am 8 December. Due to heavy small arms and artillery fire, the helicopters found it difficult to operate.[194] Indians heli landed two artillery guns on night 8-9 December. 202 Brigade successfully managed to contain 4/5 GR by 9 December and thus denied Indian 4 Corps to achieve its aim of heli landing troops near Sylhet.

After capturing Munshi Bazar, 10 Mahars moved forward on night 6-7 December and reached a few kilometres east of Maulvi Bazar by first light the next day. 313 Brigade withdrew north towards Sherpur ferry on night 8-9 December. Maulvi Bazar was secured by 81 Brigade on 9 December.[195]

On 10 December, Indian E Sector was still at Hemu i.e., 24 kilometres short of Sylhet. Prospects of E Sector linking up with heli landed 4/5 GR were getting bleak.[196] Therefore Commander 4 Corps released 59 Brigade back to 8 Division, on 10 December,

for advance along Fenchuganj approach and early link up with 4/5 GR. 6 Rajputs led the advance and by last light 11 December were three kilometres north of Fenchuganj. There were just a few Pakistani troops on this approach. By first light 13 December, Mangla Bazar was secured. By 11 am, 6 Rajputs were in contact with Pakistani troops holding defences three kilometres south of Sylhet.

Meanwhile 313 Brigade after crossing Sherpur ferries on 9 December, reached Sylhet on 11 December, constantly fighting a delaying battle with 81 Indian Brigade. 3 Punjab of 81 Brigade captured Sherpur ferry site at 2 pm on 10 December and Saidpur ferry site by midday 11 December.

3 Punjab of 81 brigade reached Daadpur, about three kilometres from Sylhet at 2 pm on 13 December. Daadpur was cleared by evening 13 December. 3 Punjab and 6 Rajputs probed forward on night 13-14 December and reached southern bank of river Surma by evening of 14 December. E Sector cleared Hemu by first light on 11 December. They were at Chandighat about two kilometres south of Hemu on 16 December. On 14 December, Lt Gen Niazi rang up Sylhet and asked for two companies to defend Dacca. It was too late to worry about defence of Dacca.[197] The war ended on 16 December.

Two infantry brigades with only three and a half infantry battalions kept four Indian brigades (59, 81, E Sector and EB brigade) busy for almost 25 days. Fixing of a force at its location to keep it away from critical battle at critical time is always done by a smaller force under the principle of economy of effort. Fixing a small force with much larger force reflects poor design of battle by the Indians. On Pakistani side, these two brigades would have served better strategic purpose if they had withdrawn to Ashuganj by 6 or 7 December. Both sides lacked strategic thinking.

27 Brigade under Brigadier Saadullah was located at Brahminbaria. It was responsible for area from Madhabpur to Salda Nadi, just north of Comilla, a front of approximately 40

miles. Approach from Agartala-Akhaura-Brahminbaria was the shortest and most critical. Akhaura was critical for 27 Brigade as well as for the Indians. 27 Brigade consisted of 12 FF, 33 Baloch, 12 AK less two companies, one Mujahid Battalion and one R&S Platoon. 12 FF was covering the area from Akhaura to Gangasagar while 33 Baloch was defending Kasba approach.[198] The brigade had four light tanks (Three PT-76 and one M 24). The brigade was supported by ten 105 mm howitzers from 31 Field Regiment, two 105 mm howitzers from 53 Field Regiment and two 120 mm mortars from 210 Mortar Battery.

57 Indian Division launched offensive against 27 Pakistani Brigade. 57 Division consisted of 73 and 311 Infantry Brigades apart from complete Divisional Artillery. The Division also had Sierra Force comprising one infantry battalion, 2 EBR and Mukti Bahaini under its command. It was three Indian brigades against one depleted Pakistani brigade. During night 30 November- 1 December, 10 Bihar of 311 Brigade commenced attack against 12 FF.[199] 10 Bihar secured Noapara and Lonasar. 4 Guards of 311 Brigade passed through them, crossed river Titas and established a blocking position at Kodda, west of the railway bridge on river Titas. At the same time 73 Brigade attacked Company of 12 FF at Gangasagar from the south. 2 EBR of Sierra Force secured Singerbel jetty and Rajapur. 12 FF was attacked from the north by Sierra Force, from south with 311 Brigade, and 4 Guards had established a blocking position in their rear. At midday on 2 December Lt Col Basit (GSO-1 of Division) collected almost a company strength of troops belonging to infantry, engineers, military police and others from division headquarters and along with two tanks available at Brahminbaria counter attacked 4 Guards around evening 2 December. 4 Guards were surprised. They had no heavy anti-tank weapons. They left their position blocking the railway line and withdrew into marshes in their south.

Gangasagar railway station was lost to 14 Guards by midday on 3 December. Akhaura was attacked by 311 Brigade from the south

and by Sierra Force from the north on night 4-5 December. Heavy pressure was exerted on 12 FF from all directions.



Map 21.
Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

The unit withdrew to Brahminbaria after getting permission from Division HQs, on 5 December leaving the town to 311 Indian Brigade.[200] 33 Baloch was also withdrawn to Brahminbaria along with 12 FF. Around midday 5 December, Gen Qazi decided that 27 Brigade's next main defensive position would be Ashuganj and not Brahminbaria. Though the task of 57 Division stipulated capture of Daudkandi after clearance of Akhaura, but on the advice of its GOC, Commander 4 Corps allowed the Division to

pursue the withdrawing Pakistani troops to Ashuganj. 57 Division commenced advance towards Brahminbaria on 6 December with 73 Brigade leading and Sierra Force moving on a track on its north.[201] 27 Brigade screen position was contacted by last light on 6 December. 57 Division moved forward on 7 December planning to attack Brahminbaria the next day. As planned, 27 Brigade started withdrawing from Brahminbaria during night 6-7 December. On 7 December, 73 Indian Brigade commenced a cautious advance towards Brahminbaria. They never realised that the city had been vacated the previous night. On morning 8 December, after noticing the withdrawal of 27 Brigade, GOC 57 Division ordered 311 Brigade to lead the advance beyond Brahminbaria. Unopposed capturing of Brahminbaria emboldened everyone in HQ 57 Division. 311 Brigade was told to take risks and capture Ashuganj Railway Bridge intact. By evening 8 December, 18 Rajput met stiff resistance by 33 Baloch at Talsher. Therefore, they were ordered to approach Ashuganj from northeast by midday 9 December. They were to be followed by 10 Bihar. Maj Gen Majeed and Brig Saadullah wanted to make sure that all their troops and equipment were safely ferried across Meghna and the railway bridge was destroyed. However, fast approaching 18 Rajput from the north east didn't give time to do both the things. At Ashuganj Company 12 AK, artillery observers, engineers, headquarters staff of 27 Brigade, brigade signals company and all available took up positions on the railway embankment and started firing at 18 Rajput. Artillery fire was also directed at the enemy. 18 Rajput were advancing in the open, without artillery support and not expecting much resistance. They fired back but after suffering many casualties they realised that they were in trouble. Finding themselves in a difficult situation, 18 Rajput started withdrawing. Pakistani troops on the embankment along with one tank followed them. Soon 33 Baloch arrived and joined counter attack on the withdrawing 18 Rajput. The withdrawal turned into a rout. 18 Rajput left 120 dead while running away. Indian tank crew were also surprised and abandoned eight running tanks which were captured by 33 Baloch.

10 Bihar following 18 Rajput joined their compatriots in rearward move.[202] However without waiting for the outcome of the counter attack, GOC 14 Division ordered the demolition of the bridge on 9 December. At the time of demolition, bulk of 27 Brigade and all guns were still east of the river. During the night 9-10 December, Brig Saadullah organised the crossing of his brigade and all the artillery to the west side of the river through improvised ferrying. 18 Rajputs secured Ashuganj on 10 December without any opposition. [203]

On 9 December, Chandpur and Daudkandi had also fallen to Indians. 4 Corps Commander met GOC 57 Division around noon on 9 December at Brahminbaria and discussed the latest situation. They decided to contain HQ 14 Division and 27 Brigade troops at Bariab Bazar and cross River Meghna farther south, where no opposition was expected.[204] 311 Brigade was to be heli-landed at Raipur and ordered to capture Narsingdi in the south. 73 Brigade minus was tasked to cross Meghna by boats. Sierra Force was also tasked to cross the river near Narsingdi. On 9 December, 4 Guards and a troop of 82 Light Regiment were heli lifted to Raipur in ten helicopters at 3:30 pm. 73 Brigade secured a ferry site south of Ashuganj on night 9-10 December.[205] 4 Guards advanced to Narsingdi in the morning of 10 December. On 11 December, 19 Punjab from 73 Brigade contacted Pakistani troops in Bariab Bazar from the south. 73 Brigade had two battalions across the river by 12 December. Sierra Force started crossing on 11 December. By 8 am 12 December, 4 Guards captured Narsingdi.[206] East bank of river Lakhaya was reached on 14 December. By 15 December, Indian 57 Division had closed in on Dacca from the east.[207]

There was hardly anything which Maj Gen Majeed or Brig Saadullah did to prevent further advance of 57 Division towards Dacca.[208] Headquarters 14 Division and 27 Infantry Brigade virtually remained out of battle from 10 December onwards.

It took 57 Division 10 days to reach Meghna, a distance of 32

kilometres from the border. The delay was caused by only two and a half infantry battalions i.e., 12 FF, 33 Baloch and 12 AK less two companies. With all the odds favouring the Indians, it was a bit too slow an advance. It is surprising that while Indian army crossed international borders on 21 November in other sectors, in Agartala - Akhaura sector they did it on night 30 November- 1 December. Being one of the shortest approaches, it could have finished the war early and saved many lives.

On the Pakistani side, it must be realised the 14 Division was woefully short of fire power. One field regiment and one mortar battery distributed over the divisional front could not provide adequate fire support. On top of it, Indians had air supremacy. Manoeuvre without fire or with inadequate fire is doomed to fail, and that's what happened. Inaction at Bariab Bazar, from 9 December onwards, was also a great mistake. The conduct of battle by 14 Division hardly contributed towards the strategic aims of the Pakistani Eastern Command.

SOUTH EASTERN SECTOR

The South Eastern Sector was a strange mix of flat open country in the north and protruding salients, dense forests and hilly terrain in the southeast. It provided one of the Barra shortest approach to Dacca i.e., only 80 kilometres. Near Feni, Pakistani territory was only 16 kilometres wide and strategic rail and road link to Chittagong passed through this vulnerable area. This sector was being defended by so called 39 adhoc Division. The Division was raised on 18 October 1971.[209] Maj Gen Rahim Khan was appointed its GOC on 18 November.[210] It had two regular and two adhoc brigades under its command. It had no armour, one field regiment less a troop (53 Field Regiment) and one mortar battery (171 Mortar Battery). The Division was defending a front of 320 kilometres from Salda Nadi to the Burmese border.[211] 117 Brigade, under Brig Atif, with its HQ at Comilla was responsible from Salda Nadi in the north to line Chauddagram- Laksham-Chandpur in the south. It had three infantry battalions (30 Punjab,

23 Punjab and 25 FF). It was being supported by two field batteries of 53 Field Regiment. 30 Punjab was defending Comilla while 23 Punjab was guarding Laksham approach. 25 FF less two companies was guarding Mian Bazar, Kishanagar approach in the middle.

53 Brigade under Brig Aslam Niazi, with its HQ at Feni was responsible for area exclusive of Chauddagram to Feni inclusive. It had two infantry battalions. 15 Baloch was inside Belonia salient and 39 Baloch was deployed between Chauddagram and Feni. Brigade also had one company of 21 AK along with the CO and second in command. The Brigade was being supported by a field battery of 53 Field Regiment.[212]

91 Adhoc Brigade under Brig Taskeen ud Din with its HQ at Karer Hat was responsible for area east of river Feni to include Ramgarh, Karer Hat and parts of Chittagong hill tracks. It comprised of two companies of 24 FF, three companies of EPCAF and one Mujahid battalion. The brigade was supported by 171 Mortar Battery.

97 Adhoc Brigade under Brig Atta Malik had its HQ at Chittagong and was responsible from Chittagong Hill tracks till border with Burma. It comprised of 48 Baloch (Now 11 Sind), 24 FF less two companies, 2 Commando battalion having one company and two platoons, a marine battalion and a wing of EPCAF. It was being supported by two mortars from 171 Mortar Battery.

23 Indian Division of 4 Corps was tasked to defeat 39 Pakistani Adhoc Division by launching a main effort of three brigades along Laksham - Chandpur approach and two auxiliary efforts. First auxiliary effort of a brigade along Comilla - Daudkandi approach to secure the northern flank of the main effort and second auxiliary effort against 53 Brigade by Kilo Sector (brigade sized formation) to secure Feni and thus prevent the two brigades in Chittagong area to move north against the main effort. Thereafter, Kilo Sector was to press towards Chittagong. Kilo Sector was to operate

directly under HQ 4 Corps. 61 Brigade of 57 Division was placed under 23 Division to launch an auxiliary effort in Comilla sector. 23 Division was to launch the main effort and Kilo Sector the auxiliary in the south.[213] Belonia salient posed threat to the base of operations of the main effort and therefore had to be cleared before the main effort was launched. Therefore, Kilo Sector started its operations on 5 November to clear Belonia salient being defended by 15 Baloch. By 10 November, Kilo Sector had captured northern portion of the enclave. There was no tactical sense in deploying a Pakistani infantry battalion inside Belonia salient. The unit was thin on ground and surrounded by Indian Territory on all sides. The second offensive was launched on night 24-25 November. Indian troops and Mukti Bahaini infiltrated through open spaces at most of the places. 15 Baloch and EPCAF troops were ordered to exfiltrate to general area Pathangar. Pathangar is at the base of Belonia salient, few kilometres east of Feni. 15 Baloch withdrew to Pathangar by last light 26 November. It was deployed along the road which moved east from Feni till Indian border and then turned south and crossed Feni River at Subapur.

53 Brigade withdrew to Begumganj about 32 kilometres west of Feni on 28 November.[214] 53 Brigade was Eastern Command's reserve. It was moved to Feni on 20 November. In next eight days it had withdrawn to Begumganj 32 kilometres west of Feni. It served no tactical or strategic purpose at Feni and Eastern Command missed its reserves badly on 16 December. A commander should know when and where to employ his reserves. This is one of the most important decision of a commander.

61 Indian Brigade launched the northern auxiliary after last light 3 December. 7 Raj Rif was guided by Mukti Bahaini towards Pipulia, located south of Comilla. Soon Pipulia was secured by 61 Brigade, thus protecting the northern flank of the main effort.

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Main effort was launched after last light on 3 December. 301 Brigade supported by 1 Independent armoured squadron (PT-76 tanks) started infiltrating behind 25 FF positions at Mian Bazar. 14 Jat moved to the rear of 25 FF and took up position. 1/11 GR infiltrated further west and occupied the prepared intermediary positions at Kishanagar. 181 Brigade followed it closely and was tasked to isolate Laksham from the north and west so that 301 Brigade could move on and capture Chandpur. 83 Brigade advanced on Chauddagram- Laksham road to attack Laksham from the south.

At first light 4 December, 25 FF was attacked by 1 Independent armour squadron. After destroying four tanks and delaying the enemy till midday, 25 FF less two companies withdrew towards Kashinagar not knowing that it was already occupied by Indians. Resultantly the Commanding Officer of 25 FF along with his battalion headquarters and around 100 troops were taken prisoners. Thereafter, 301 Brigade concentrated at Buschi and 181 Brigade led the advance to Laksham on night 4-5 December. On 5 December, 181 Brigade established road blocks on north and west of Laksham. The same day, 61 Brigade was ordered to hand over area around Pipulia to 9 EBR and infiltrate north of Comilla to cut the Doudkandi road and lean on Maynamati defences from the northwest.[215] 83 Brigade synchronized its attack with 301 Brigade i.e., commenced operations on night 3-4 December along Chauddagram- Laksham approach. Road blocks were established behind Pakistani troops at Chauddagram and Parikot by first light on 4 December. 23 Punjab held on to their defences. Commander 83 Brigade had no choice but to physically attack 23 Punjab to open the road so that his artillery and logistics could move forward.[216] 23 Punjab had deployed all four companies along the border. The attack was launched on B Company around first light 5 December. Fall of B Company would have trapped 23 Punjab.

Therefore, Commanding Officer of 23 Punjab ordered his battalion to ex-filtrate and withdraw to Laksham as per plan. 23 Punjab suffered many casualties while ex-filtrating due to Indian road blocks in their rear. They however managed to withdraw to Laksham along small tracks by evening of 5 December. They also blew the bridge over river Dakatia delaying 83 Brigade for two critical days.[217]



Map 22.

Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

By the evening of 4 December, Maj Gen Rahim had identified that Indian main effort was along Laksham-Chandpur approach. He decided to abandon Feni and ordered 53 Brigade to reach Laksham at the earliest and also to dispatch two companies to Comilla. A company each of 39 Baloch and 21 AK reached Laksham by morning of 5 December. By this time, 181 Brigade had already severed road Laksham- Comilla. At 10 am, on 5 December, advance party of 53 Brigade arrived at Laksham and started organising the defences.[218] By the evening of 5 December,

39 Baloch, 15 Baloch and remnants of 23 Punjab reached Laksham. Three guns supporting 23 Punjab were joined by five guns from 53 Brigade. Laksham now had eight guns. By the morning of 6 December, Laksham had reasonably strong defence. The window of opportunity available to Indian 181 Brigade to capture Laksham on 5 December was closed on 6 December.[219] On night 5-6 December, 301 Brigade advanced toward Mudafarganj. Leading elements secured it by 11 am on 6 December. By the evening of 6 December 301 Brigade had 3 Kumaon, squadron tanks and a troop of 120 mm Mortars at Mudafarganj.

83 Brigade improvised a crossing over river Dakatia and managed to establish blocks south and east of Laksham by first light on 7 December.[220] By this time, 53 Brigade had reached Laksham.

On 7 December, Brig Atif started pulling 30 Punjab and remnants of 25 FF into Maynamati defences. Appearance of 61 Brigade on his north had forced him to make his defences more compact. Comilla town and airfield were secured by Indians without any opposition. 117 Brigade vacated even southern portion of Lalmai Hills to strengthen Maynamati defences. 23 Indian division immediately secured the southern tip of the hills and opened the vital route via Lalmai to Chandpur for logistic support of 301 Brigade.[221] By 7 December, Laksham had been surrounded by 23 Division and 301 Brigade had captured Mudafarganj. 117 and 53 Brigades had been invested in Maynamati and Laksham respectively.

301 Indian Brigade started advancing towards Chandpur where HQ 39 Division was located. Maj Gen Rahim ordered 53 Brigade to capture Mudafarganj to remove threat to Division HQ and also to open the lines of communications to Laksham. Commander 53 Brigade tasked 39 Baloch to hold Laksham and organised two columns to capture Mudafarganj. One column consisted of 15 Baloch and second of 21 AK and 23 Punjab. 15 Baloch launched

attack on night 7-8 December but due to lack of fire support failed to capture Mudafarganj. 21 AK group also unsuccessfully tried to clear the block on Hajiganj rail track the same night. Commander 53 Brigade called 15 Baloch back to Laksham and ordered 21 AK group to hold Hajiganj against advancing 301 Indian Brigade. At Hajiganj, they tried to raid an Indian gun position at midday on 8 December. They also laid ambushes on road Hajiganj -Chandpur. Despite all their efforts, 301 Brigade captured Chandpur on 9 of December. However, HQ 39 Division had vacated Chandpur on night 8-9 December in boats towards Dacca. The boat carrying Maj Gen Rahim was hit by IAF near Dacca. While Maj Gen Rahim survived with injures many of his staff died in the attack.

After the failure to capture Mudafarganj and loss of Chandpur, 53 Brigade was ordered on 8 December, by Pakistani Eastern Command to abandon Laksham and ex-filtrate to Maynamati. They ex-filtrated in small parties during night 8-9 December. Vacant Laksham fell to Indians on 9 December. 53 Brigade Commander and some of the parties reached the defences of 117 Brigade on 11 December. However, bulk of the parties were detected en-route and made prisoners. On evening of 9 December, the only resistance left in 39 Adhoc Division north of Feni was at Maynamati by 117 Brigade.[222]

On 12 December, Commander 4 Corps and GOC 23 Division decided to reduce the Maynamati defences by placing 181 and 61 Brigades under 23 Division. 301 Brigade was ordered to move to Daudkandi and cross the Meghna to secure Baidya Bazar for operations against Dacca.[223] 301 Brigade reached Daudkandi at 9:30 pm on 13 December. They started crossing River Meghna on 14 December using river craft and helicopters.[224] On 15 December, they joined the battle for Dacca, whose details will be covered later.

Despite best efforts, 61 and 181 Brigades failed to capture Maynamati till 16 December, when Pakistani troops surrendered on the orders of their Command HQ. Both the Indian brigades

suffered heavy casualties in their futile attacks on Maynamati. 7 Raj Rifles one of the units of 61 Brigade suffered 38 killed and over 100 wounded, including all the company commanders during attacks on Maynamati defences.[225] Despite all odds, 117 Brigade under Brig Atif, defeated all Indian attacks to capture Maynamati defences. Like many other places, 117 Brigade proved that given a chance, Pakistani troops were able to fight against all odds.

Indian Kilo Sector under Brig Anand was tasked to operate against Pakistani troops deployed in Belonia salient and south of it. On 9 December, after the fall of Laksham, 83 Brigade was grouped with Kilo Sector to clear area south of Feni till Chittagong.[226]

The troops in Ramgarh were ordered to withdraw to Hat Hazari at 1800 hours on 7 December. They stayed there till 17 December.[227] 91 and 97 Adhoc Brigades remained almost left out of the main strategic battles. Ideally 91 Brigade should have been employed in Feni sector, sparing 53 Brigade to remain as Eastern Command reserves. The desire to hold every inch of East Pakistan cost dearly to Pakistani Eastern Command.

The battle of 39 Adhoc Division started on evening 3 December and finished on 8 December i.e., in just five days. It happened due to mistakes in anticipation of enemy actions, distribution of fire resources over whole of the front and lack of reserves at divisional level.

NORTH CENTRAL SECTOR

This sector was formed by River Jamuna in the west, River Meghna in the east, India- East Pakistan border in the north and the city of Dacca in the south. City of Dacca was the centre of gravity of the war. Somehow both sides failed to realise this fact at the start of the war. So called 36 Adhoc Division having one infantry brigade (93 Brigade) of two infantry battalions (31 Baloch and 33 Punjab) was responsible for this sector. The only obstacle in the sector was River Brahmaputra. There was one ferry

site and a bridge on this river at Jamalpur and Mymensingh respectively. 93 Brigade under Brig Qadir had its HQ at Mymensingh. 31 Baloch under Lt Col Sultan, SJ and bar, with one wing of Rangers and some EPCAF elements was guarding Kamalpur- Jamalpur axis. 33 Punjab with 61 Wing Rangers was deployed on Haluaghat- Mymensingh axis.[228]

On the other side, Indians had tasked 101 Communications Zone Area under Maj Gen Gill to 'contact' Dacca by D plus 12-13. It is important to note that the task was to 'contact' and not to 'capture'. He had 95 Brigade and FJ Sector (Brigade size force comprising 6 Bihar, 83 BSF and Mukti Bahaini) under him at the start of the war. One mountain regiment and two mortar batteries provided artillery support. Maj Gen Gill planned to launch his main effort by 95 Brigade along Kamalpur- Jamalpur axis. FJ Sector was in auxiliary role along Haluaghat- Mymensingh axis.[229]

On 18 November, three days before India invaded East Pakistan, one infantry battalion of 95 Brigade attacked Kamalpur. The attack was beaten back. At first light on 22 November, another attack was beaten back. On 27 November, 31 Baloch put in a counter-attack and linked up with Kamalpur.[230] On 3 December, 13 Guards of 95 Brigade surrounded Kamalpur once again. On 4 December, Indian aircraft and artillery pounded Kamalpur defences for whole of the day. The same day, 1 Mahratta and a Raj Rifles battalion of 95 Brigade moved cross country and contacted C Company defences at Bakshiganj. Some troops were sent south of Bakshiganj to establish a road block. During the day, Maj Ayub, C Company commander at Bakshiganj was killed. As envisaged in his original plan, CO 31 Baloch ordered the BOPs and troops at Bakshiganj to withdraw to the delaying positions on night 4-5 December. This order was passed to Kamalpur post on radio in the evening of 4 December.[231] Kamalpur position had become a legend of resistance in 71 War. It had defeated all attacks for 21 days by 95 Indian Brigade despite being under continuous Indian artillery and air attacks. Even on 4 December, IAF



Map 23.

Source: John H Gill, An Atlas of the 1971 India-Pakistan War, The Creation of Bangladesh.

launched attack by seven MIGs at 9:30 am. It was twice repeated during the day. Between the air attacks, the post was kept under artillery and mortar fire. Captain Ahsan and his troops remained steadfast till ordered to exfiltrate on night 4-5 December. Only a portion of the platoon got back to battalion. Captain Ahsan and others were either made prisoners or got martyred trying to exfiltrate. [232]

On night 4-5 December, 31 Baloch moved to delaying position. Bakshiganj was secured by two battalions of 95 Brigade on 5 December. During the day, Maj Gen Gill was injured when his jeep went over an anti-tank mine. He was replaced by Maj Gen Nagra as Commander 101 Communications Zone Area.[233]

Colonel Sultan ordered his battalion to withdraw to Jamalpur during night 6-7 December.

On 8 December, 167 Brigade was released to 101 Communications Zone, bringing its strength equal to an infantry division. Indian 95 Brigade surrounded 31 Baloch defences at Jamalpur in the south at first light 9 December with three battalions. The defenders were subjected to heavy air and artillery fire from 9 December onwards. On 9 December, Commander 95 Brigade wrote a letter to CO 31 Baloch, telling him to surrender or face dire consequences. CO 31 Baloch wrote back that instead of writing letters he should concentrate on fighting and also wrapped a bullet in his reply. During the day, Jamalpur was continuously attacked by napalm and rockets from the air. Artillery kept up sporadic shelling.[234]

By 10 December, things were turning critical for the defence of Dacca. Troops of Indian 4 Crops had been crossing River Meghna since 9 December and had captured Narsingdi. Chandpur had been lost. Both 14 and 16 Divisions had shown their inability to send troops to Dacca as they them self were fighting desperate battles. In these desperate circumstances, on 10 December, Maj Gen Jamshed ordered Brig Qadir to vacate Jamalpur and Mymensingh and fall back to Kaliakar near Dacca. Brig Qadir's

protests against vacating prepared defences were turned down. The actual plans had envisaged main battles to be fought from these defences without any option of withdrawal. The forward battalions were ordered to withdraw on night 10-11 December.[235] As the time would prove, it was a wrong decision.

Lt Col Sultan personally led the breakout attack against 1 Mahratta positions. It proved to be a costly breakout. While Lt Col Sultan with about 500 of his battalion managed to break-out, he lost all his heavy weapons and vehicles. Many became prisoners and 233 were killed.[236]

33 Punjab after leaving a rear-guard company at Madhupur had moved onto Tangail on 11 December. Remnants of 31 Baloch reached Madhupur by midday on 11 December, where they joined the company of 33 Punjab. By the evening, Lt Col Sultan with his troops joined Brigade HQ at Tangail. On the same day, Indians secured Jamalpur and Mymensingh. Around 5 pm, Indian 2 Para battalion was para dropped at Tangail. Bulk of Pakistani 93 Brigade had already withdrawn south of Tangail to Kaliakar. 95 Indian Brigade joined 2 Paras at 5 pm on 12 December. Tangail was secured by last light.

On 12 December, leading elements of 57 Division of 4 Corps were at Barpa, five kilometres from Demra ferry site which was nine kilometres from Dacca. 57 Division had five infantry battalions and two artillery regiments west of Meghna. On 13 December, GOC 57 Division decided to advance to Demra with 311 Brigade and to Tungi with 73 Brigade.

In the Central Sector, 95 Brigade resumed advance from Tangail at 6 am on 13 December, and by 8 am 14 December they contacted Pakistani defences along river Turag north of Tungi. Remnants of 31 Baloch under Lt Col Sultan were holding the defences.

By midnight on 14 December, 95 Brigade had reached Turag with three battalions, FJ Sector was at Safipur and 167 Brigade

along with 2 Para were at Tangail. In 4 Corps area, Sierra Force had crossed river Lakhaya. Squadron of PT 76 tanks having crossed river Meghna were ordered to reach Demra. 301 Brigade got across Daudkandi to Baidya Bazar and by evening of 14 December was heading for Demra ferry site from the south.

Dacca was almost defence-less with only remnants of 93 Brigade available to Maj Gen Jamshed. The 26,250 men in uniform in Dacca were signaller, service corps and maintenance personnel, nursing orderlies, rear parties, mujahids, razakars and West Pakistan police. Very few of them were from the fighting or supporting arms.[237] On 14 December, due to fast deteriorating situation, Gen Yahya Khan authorised Commander Eastern Command to take necessary measures to stop the fighting. On 14 December at 5 pm, Lt Gen Niazi sent a message to Indian Army Chief through American Consul General in Dacca accepting ceasefire and asking for safety of all military, non-military and non-Bengalis. The message was received at Delhi at 2:30 pm 15 December. Reply was received by Lt Gen Niazi at 11:30 pm on 15 December.[238]

On 15 December, Indian troops kept on advancing towards Dacca from all directions. Troops of 101 Communications Zone advanced towards Mirpur along Sabhar axis. Pakistani Brig Bashir, responsible for defence of Mirpur axis, hurriedly collected some troops, mainly EPCAF and placed them on Mirpur Bridge by midnight 15-16 December.[239] 2 Paras resumed advance at 10 pm on 15 December from Sabhar. They reached three kilometres west of Mirpur Bridge at about 2 am on 16 December. Maj Gen Nagra travelled to 2 Para position at 8:30 am on 16 December. He contacted Pakistani troops at Mirpur Bridge and sent a message to Lt Gen Niazi to surrender.[240] On receipt of this message, there was a brief discussion at HQ Pakistani Eastern Command and decision to lay down arms was taken. At 3 pm, Maj Gen Nagra moved his troops into Dacca. By the afternoon of 16 December, the second capital of Pakistan was under the control of its harshest foe.[241]

WEST PAKISTAN THEATRE OF WAR

Pakistan Army's Defence strategy was based on the assumption that defence of East Pakistan lay in the West Pakistan.[242] It meant that loss of territory in East Pakistan would have to be compensated by gaining equal or less but more sensitive territory in the West Pakistan theatre of war.

"Gen Yahya and Gen Hamid were not so naive as to believe that our forces in East Pakistan would be able to defeat Indian aggression. But like their predecessors, they did believe that a lightening thrust from West Pakistan would perhaps incline India towards a reasonable settlement."[243]

After 21 November, the day India attacked in the Eastern theater, Pakistan tried through USA for a political settlement of the dispute. Soon it became clear that India would not halt military operations, short of victory. Pakistan was left with no option but to initiate hostilities in the west as Pakistans military strategy was based on the premise that defence of East Pakistan lay in the West Pakistan.[244] On 3 December 1971, Pakistan launched an air strike in the Western Theatre on Indian airfields. It marked the beginning of operations in this theatre.

Western Theatre could be divided into four segments i.e., along LOC in Kashmir, Ravi-Chenab Corridor, Ravi - Beas Corridor and area South of Sutlej.

OPPOSING PLANS

As already pointed out at the beginning of this chapter Gen Manekshaw, the Indian Army Chief had, "decided to concentrate maximum effort for offensive operations against East Pakistan.....(and) a general defensive posture in the West."[245] Therefore in the Western theatre, Indian army was on strategic defensive. The Indian Western and Southern Commands were responsible for the Western theater. Western Command was commanded by Lt Gen K.P. Candeth and Southern Command by Lt Gen G.G. Bewoor. Western Command was responsible for the

area from Ladakh down to Ganganagar district of Rajasthan. Southern Command had the responsibility for the remainder of Rajasthan and Gujrat. Western Command had three Corps, namely, 15, 1 and 11 Corps; and Southern Command had two Divisions, namely, 11 and 12 Divisions. 15 Corps was responsible for the defence of bulk of Jammu and Kashmir. It had 3, 19, 25, 10 and 26 Infantry Divisions. 3 Infantry Division was deployed in Ladakh. 19 Infantry Division in the Kashmir Valley. 25 Infantry Division in the Poonch – Jhangar area. 10 Infantry Division was earmarked for the Akhnur area and 26 Infantry Division in the Jammu area. 1 Corps comprising 36, 39 and 54 Infantry Divisions was responsible for the defence of the area Samba- Pathankot-Gurdaspur. 11 Corps comprising 15, 7 and 14 Infantry Divisions and Foxtrot Sector was responsible for the defence of Punjab and the Ganganagar district of Rajasthan. In the Southern Command, 12 Infantry Division was responsible for the Jaisalmer Sector and 11 Infantry Division for the Barmer Sector. For offensive operations in Jammu and Kashmir, some local offensives were to be conducted, depending upon the situation. 10 and 26 Infantry Divisions of 15 Corps and most part of 1 Corps were to take part in the offensive. 11 Corps was to be prepared to launch a limited offensive opposite its sector. 1 Armoured Division, which was the Army Headquarters reserve was located in the Corps Zone and was to be made available by the Army Headquarters, if an offensive was to be launched. In the Southern Command, 11 and 12 Infantry Divisions were to be prepared to undertake limited offensive operations. Western Air Command led by Air Marshal M.M. Engineer, was tasked to inflict maximum damage on the Pakistani Air Force, as well as render support to Western Army Command in its operations. For this purpose an Advance Headquarters Western Air Command was established along Headquarters Western Command. Western Naval Command being commanded by Vice Admiral S.N. Kohli was tasked to carry out a strong raid on Karachi harbour, inflict maximum damage to the installations and in the process, destroy the Pakistan's naval might as much as possible[246].

Pakistan Army aimed at defending the territorial integrity of Pakistan by being on strategic defensive in the Eastern Theatre and launching strategic offensive (riposte) in the Western Theatre to capture as much Indian territory as possible. By August 1971, Pakistani planners had realised that an Indian offensive in the East Pakistan was imminent. The Pakistani plans of a riposte in the Western Theatre, against India were based on the contingency that India will initiate the hostilities by attacking East Pakistan.

Pakistan Army planned that the holding formations would launch local attacks all along the border to improve defensive posture. Army auxiliary efforts were to be launched in Poonch, Chhamb and Rahimyar Khan sectors to draw enemy reserves away from the intended place of main effort. At an opportune moment main effort of a corps consisting of one armoured division (1 Armoured Division) and two infantry divisions (33 and 7) was to be launched in area south of River Sutlej while retaining a strong reserve of one armoured division (6 Armoured Division) and an infantry division (17) in Ravi-Chenab corridor. In Kashmir, 12 Infantry Division commanded by Maj Gen Akbar Khan was tasked to capture Poonch. For this purpose he had 2 AK Brigade and 26 Brigade. Remaining four brigades were in defensive role. 23 Division commanded by Maj Gen Eftikhar Janjua was tasked to capture Chhamb. He had 2 Armoured Brigade, 66 Brigade, 111 Brigade and 4 AK Brigade for this operation. In Ravi- Chenab Corridor, 1 Corps commanded by Lt Gen Irshad Ahmed Khan was responsible for the defence of Ravi Chenab corridor. Resources available to 1 Corps were 8, 15 Infantry Divisions and 8 Independent Armoured Brigade Group. 4 Corps was commanded by Lt Gen Bahadur Sher. It was essentially deployed for the defence of Lahore and Kasur sectors. Within the Corps, 10 Division commanded by Maj Gen S.A.Z. Naqvi was responsible for the defence of Lahore sector whereas 11 Division commanded by Maj Gen Malik Abdul Majid was responsible for the defence of Kasur sector. Apart from defensive tasks, the divisions were also assigned battalion sized attack objectives, some 500 to 2000

yards inside Indian territory. In Sulemanki sector, 105 Independent Infantry Brigade Group commanded by Brig Amir Hamza, HJ, was responsible for defence of Sulemanki Headworks. In the area south of River Sutlej, 18 Division commanded by Maj Gen B.M. Mustafa was initially responsible to defend the border of Sindh. However, later it was also given the mission to capture Jaisalmir. The resources allocated for this purpose were 51 Brigade with 22 Cavalry and 206 Brigade with 38 Cavalry.

OPERATIONS IN KASHMIR:

POONCH OPERATION

12 Division's primary task was defensive. It had five brigades deployed for defence on a front of over 250 miles. The reserve brigade i.e. 26 Brigade was to occupy counter penetration positions and provide limited counter attack capability to the division. There were few reserves at brigade or battalion level. On an average a battalion was deployed over a front of twenty miles. Notwithstanding the above mentioned handicaps, Gen Akbar was tasked to capture Poonch which was a large town. 12 Division planned to capture Poonch by 2 AK and 26 Brigades in two phases. In phase 1, 26 Brigade was tasked to capture Guthrian, Shahpur, Thanpir, Jandrola and Chandak ridge. Simultaneously 2 AK Brigade in phase 1 was to capture Danna, Banwat, Qasba, Chechian Bandi and Residency Ridge. In phase 2, 26 Brigade was tasked to capture area upto river Mandi in the east and Poonch in the south. 2 AK Brigade was tasked to capture Poonch, Rabtanwali and Chajja area upto river Poonch.[247] Subsidiary operations included capture of Sanghar Post by 28 AK Regiment, Khana – Belnoi area by 18 AK Regiment, Kauntal (Lipa), Chota Kazinag and Chakothi post by 1 AK Brigade and interdict movement across bridge Chandak - Poonch by commando company of 6 AK Brigade and commando platoons of 9 AK and 26 AK battalions.[248]

On the Indian side, 93 Infantry Brigade with four battalions was responsible for defence of Poonch sector. Four battalions were considered insufficient for defence. Therefore Indians reinforced the sector with 33 Infantry Brigade of 39 Infantry Division by end November. Two battalions of this brigade were used to reinforce the defence of 93 Infantry Brigade and one battalion with the Brigade Headquarters was kept as reserve. 93 Infantry Brigade was deployed on various approaches leading to Poonch. Two battalions were deployed on the ridge line to the south of Poonch; and on arrival of 33 Brigade, one more battalion

was also deployed in this area. In the north of River Poonch, two battalions of 93 Brigade and one battalion of 33 Brigade were deployed. Of these, 1/4 Gorkha Rifles was deployed on the ridge between Tatan Di Rangur and Betar Nullahs. 6 Sikh was deployed on the ridge between Betar and Darungli Nullahs and 8 Jat in the Madari complex.

13 Mahar the reserve battalion was in area Jeranwaligali. Headquarters 93 Infantry Brigade was in Poonch while Headquarters 33 Brigade was in Surankot[249].

26 Brigade had planned its operation in four phases with 26 AK to capture Guthrian by 9:30 pm on 3 December and Shahpur Ridge by 3 am on 4 December. In phase 2, 9 AK was to capture Pothi-Thanpir-Booli Ridge by 5:30 am on 4 December. In phase 3, 16 AK was to capture Jandola-Point 7030-Mandi Ridge by 5:30 am on 4 December. Capturing of remaining area was planned in phase 4 on orders.[250] 2 AK Brigade planned to launch its operation in 5 phases. First phase was capture of Danna feature, Qasba-Chechian Bandi and Sangar Ridge by 7 AK, 19 AK and 28 AK respectively. 5 FF was to be launched in phase 2 to capture Kamal Dheri-Point 5425 and Banwat by 5:30 am on 4 December. In phase 3, 5 FF was to capture Residency Ridge and Poonch by 5:30 pm on 4 December. 28 AK was tasked to capture Rabtanwali – Rakh Haveli in phase 4 by 5:30 am on 5 December. In Phase 5, it was planned to capture Gulpur – Chajja area upto River Poonch by 7 AK by 5:30 am on 6 December.[251] Phase 1 of 26 Brigade operation commenced with 26 AK attacking Guthrian - Shahpur. Guthrian and Shahpur were being defended by a platoon and a company of 11 Jammu and Kashmir Militia respectively.[252] Pakistani guns started preparatory bombardment at 7:30 pm.[253] Charlie and Delta companies of 26 AK left the FUP at 8 pm to capture Guthrian. The troops of Indian 11 J&K Militia allowed the attackers to close upto 300 meters and then opened fire. Charlie and Delta companies suffered many casualties. One of the company commander was wounded.[254] Some troops managed to get into Guthrian defences but were evicted soon by an Indian

local counter attack.[255] However success signal had already been fired. The Division HQ therefore got the impression that Guthrian had been secured. [256] However due to constant enemy artillery fire, the troops dispersed and withdrew to Nezapir. 26 AK battalion lost one officer and 38 other ranks during the night.

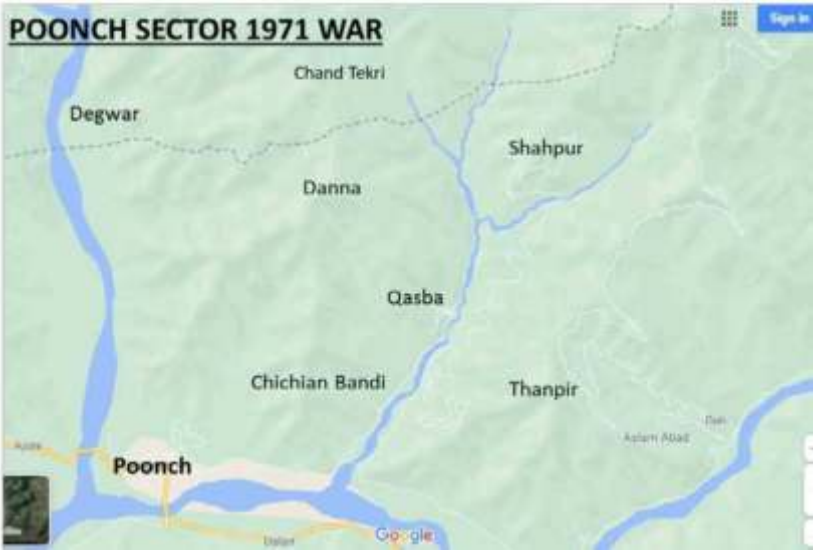
As per Division plan, while 26 AK was to capture Guthrian-Shahpur feature, 7 AK battalion of 2 AK Brigade was to capture Danna feature in Division phase 1. It would have opened the supply route and linked up with three depth battalions (9, 16 and 19 AK) tasked to capture Pothi, Thanpir, Jandola, Mandi, Qasba and Chechain Bandi through infiltration.

Alpha and Bravo Companies of 7 AK battalion were tasked to capture Danna from the rear.[257] Danna feature (called picket 405-406 complex by Indians) was held by 6 Sikhs.[258] Initially the H hour was fixed at 11 pm 3 December but it was postponed to 11:30 pm. However, the guns were not informed about the change in H hour. Resultantly, when the battalion crossed the start line at 11:30 pm, the artillery had already finished their fire. Despite some set backs, 6 Sikhs held its position. Both the attacking company commanders of 7 AK were injured. There were many casualties. Loss of company commanders, break down of communications, and the darkness destroyed command and control. By 4 am, men started moving back and the attack was called off. Casualties of the two companies were one JCO and nineteen troops killed and two officer, one JCO and fifty six troops injured.

Failure of 26 and 7 AK sealed the fate of the operation. However as the infiltrating battalions (9 and 19 AK) had already commenced their operations, therefore they continued moving, oblivious of the failure of the two battalions tasked to clear the supply route for them.

9 AK battalion had been tasked to infiltrate and occupy Thanpir, Booli, and Pothi ridges to dominate Chandak - Poonch road. Out of these, only Thanpir was held by a company minus of 11 J&K Militia. One platoon from this company had been sent to

reinforce Guthrian which had been attacked by 26 AK. 9 AK tasked Alpha company to capture Booli, Charlie company to capture Thanpir, Delta company to capture Pothi spur and Bravo company to be in reserve. At 8:30 pm, 9 AK advanced from Kirni Gali towards Thanpir with Alpha company leading. By 6:15 am on 4 December, Thanpir, Pothi ridges and Booli spur had been captured with few casualties. [259]



Map 24.
Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

19 AK battalion (2 AK Brigade) had been tasked to capture Qasba and Chechian Bandi by 3 am on 4 December. At 3 pm on 3 December, Lt Col Nawaz, the CO of 19 AK Battalion delivered his orders for attack. The plan was to capture Qasba with B and C companies in the first phase and Chechian Bandi with A and D companies in the second phase. Chechian Bandi was being defended by troops of 8 Jat.[260]

B and C companies captured Qasba successfully around 8:30

pm hours without any incident. A and D companies crossed the start line at 9 pm and soon were engaged by Indian small arms and artillery fire. At 3 am on 4 December, due to intense Indian fire, the troops dispersed. Therefore the company commander ordered them to withdraw. On the way back, they found the dead body of their CO, Lt Col Nawaz. By 6 am on 4 December, 19 AK was back on the home side of Cease Fire Line.[261]

16 AK Battalion was tasked to capture Jandrola Ridge- point 7030, after capture of Thanpir by 9 AK. The battalion commander gave his orders at 3 pm. C and D companies were to assault the objective whereas A and B companies were kept in reserve. The battalion moved from Kirni with D company leading at 6:30 pm. As Guthrian was not cleared by 9:30 pm, the battalion was ordered to bypass it and move to their objective. 16 AK secured Jandrola ridge by 9:45 am on 4 December.

5 FF was to follow 19 AK and capture Banwat and Point 5425 by first light on 4 December. The battalion crossed Kirni Gali at 11:45 pm. Having lost wireless contact with brigade headquarters they kept moving near the CFL. First the casualties from Danna and after first light, the dead body of Lt Col Nawaz the CO 19 AK, passed through the battalion. The second in command of the unit was killed by Indian mortar shell. After some time the unit went back to its original position.[262]

The commando company comprising platoons of 9 and 26 AK battalions infiltrated and reached its objective area near Mandi. It raided an engineers dump and then was chased by Indians till it exfiltrated on 17 December. Commando company of 6 AK brigade was tasked to interdict road Chandak - Mandi. It reached Chandak bridge at 3 am on 4 December.[263] The force managed to secure Chandak bridge (called Kalai bridge by Indians) and thus cut off main road communications to Poonch via Surankot.[264]

After the failure of 7 AK to capture Danna, GOC released 51 Punjab, the divisional reserves, to 2 AK Brigade at 4 am on 4 December. The battalion was tasked to attack Danna at first light.

51 Punjab attacked Danna at 7:30 am on 4 December. The attack was supported by nine batteries of artillery. At 9:30 am, 51 Punjab mistakenly informed that Danna had been captured. In actual fact they had only managed to reach the forward spurs of the objective. At 4 pm it was confirmed that Danna was still in Indian hands.[265] At this time the situation was that 9 and 16 AK battalions having successfully infiltrated had secured their objectives. However attacks by 26, 7 and 19 AK had failed to open the supply route to the two infiltrated battalions. Attack by 51 Punjab the divisional reserves had also failed to open the supply route. 5 FF was still not in communications. At 5 pm, GOC 12 Division made a new plan to open the route to the two infiltrated battalions by employing 51 Punjab, 7 AK, 19 AK and 5 FF. At 7 pm the two brigade commanders were briefed about the plan. Commander 26 Brigade objected to the plan and met the GOC at 9:30 pm on 4 December. At 11 pm the GOC called off the attack. In addition to the objections of commander 26 Brigade, Indian attacks in Lipa and threat to Hajira - Kotli road forced 12 Division to go onto defensive.

It took some time for Indian 93 Brigade to know that Thanpir, Booli and Pothi complex had been captured by Pakistani troops i.e 9 AK battalion and also that Pakistani troops were in control of Chandak bridge (Commando company of 6 AK brigade) and present near Mandi (Commando platoons of 26 and 9 AK battalions). They immediately tasked their reserve battalion i.e. 13 Mahar to recapture the Thanpir complex and HQ 33 brigade with some Para Military forces to clear the Mandi area.[266] 13 Mahar commenced its attack at 4 pm on 4 December, encircling the A company of 9 AK from three sides the next day. The Booli ridge (called Chandak ridge by Indians) was captured by 13 Mahar by last light on 4 December.[267] During the night of 4-5 December, the commanding officer of 9 AK while visiting his companies was struck by a stray bullet and died with out any one in the regiment knowing about it. In the battalion headquarters, Maj Raiz Bashir the battery commander, Maj Khairat C company commander and

Capt Alvi the adjutant organised the defence with C, D and B companies. Indians counter attacked Thanpir with a battalion at 10 am on 5 December. The attack failed due to effective artillery and small arms fire by the defenders.

At 9 pm 5 December, Headquarters 26 Brigade ordered 9 and 16 AK battalions to exfiltrate to own area. The exfiltration started at 4 pm on 5 December. Body of Commanding Officer of 9 AK was also found during exfiltration and brought back by the unit. 16 AK commenced its exfiltration at 5:30 pm on 5 December and reached Kirni by first light 6 December.

A diversionary attack by 28 AK had been planned to facilitate the main attack on Poonch. 28 AK Battalion was tasked to capture Sirian ridge with two companies during phase 1 of 2 AK Brigade. The force was commanded by Maj Latif. The troops reached FUP at 7:35 pm. It was about 2000 feet below the objective. Sirian ridge (called langoor picket by Indians) was being defended by a company of 1/4 Gorkha Rifles. The troops reached fairly close to the objective. At this time Maj Latif was killed. Serian ridge could not be secured.[268] Thereafter the attack was called off at 2 am on 4 December.[269]

Two companies of 18 AK Battalion had been tasked to capture a machine gun post opposite Pakistani Nattar Post. Alpha company left the FUP at 8 pm. The attack was held up by Indian fire. The reserve platoon tried to close in but due to heavy fire was pinned down. Finally the attack was called off.[270]

After successfully defending Poonch sub-sector, the Indians went onto tactical offensive operations in Kashmir.On night 10-11 December, Indians captured Khaki Tekri. GOC 25 Indian Infantry Division decided to capture Daruchian, a feature dominating the road to Kotli. Indian 21 Punjab managed to capture some posts around the feature by 10-11 December. 14 Grenadier was tasked to attack Daruchian position (called Chamba feature on Pakistani side) on night 13-14 December.[271] 29 AK Battalion of 3 AK Brigade was defending Daruchian. On night 13-14 December, 14

Grenadier attacked two Pakistani positions i.e., Chamba and Topa. These were defended by a platoon each. "At about 0:45 am on 14 December, Indians started climbing on Chamba feature from all directions.[272] Coordinated artillery and small arms fire was brought on them. The attack was repulsed. Next wave of enemy attack was launched at 3:30 am. However, due to intense artillery air burst fire, they pulled back. Last wave of attack came at 5 am.[273] Due to accurate artillery and small arms fire, Indian troops dispersed, suffering heavy casualties.[274]

CHHAMB OPERATION

The geography of Chhamb and strategic importance of Akhnur has already been covered in the chapter on 1965 war. Capture of Chhamb facilitated advance to Akhnur. Pakistan therefore, decided to capture Chhamb with reinforced 23 Infantry Division.

On the Indian side, 10 Indian Infantry Division under 15 Corps, was responsible for the defence of Chhamb. "It was deployed from River Chenab to Mendhar (Laleal sector).[275] 10 Infantry Division consisted of 52 Infantry Brigade (Concentrated east of Munnawar Tawi) having three infantry battalions, 68 Infantry Brigade (Concentrated at Jaurian) having four infantry battalions, 191 Infantry Brigade (Deployed in Chhamb area) having four infantry battalions and 28 Infantry Brigade (Deployed in Kalidhar area) having five infantry battalions.[276] "3 Armoured Brigade less an armoured regiment, of 15 Corps was also under command of 10 Division."[277] The division had three field regiments (25 pounders), one light regiment (120 mm mortars), one mountain regiment (105 mm, Italian howitzers), one medium regiment (5.5 inch guns) and one medium regiment (130 mm guns) as artillery support.[278] GOC 10 Indian Division planned to first blunt Pakistan's offensive in the sector and then launch his counter offensive with a view to advance towards Gujrat. However, on 1 November 71, the GOC was told to take his main defences forward and ensure that there was no loss of territory.[279]

Pakistani 23 Division was a defensive formation responsible

for area from River Chenab in the south to Charhoi valley in the north. 7 Azad Kashmir Brigade was defending Mirpur sector, 4 Azad Kashmir Brigade was defending Bhimber Sector and 20 Brigade was responsible for the defence of Munawar – Mattewala sector. The division was also given an offensive task. Accordingly, 66 Brigade, 111 Brigade and newly raised 2 Armoured Brigade were placed under command of 23 Division for offensive in Chhamb sub-sector. 2 Armoured Brigade had 26 Cavalry, 11 Cavalry, 28 Cavalry and 12 Independent squadron on its ORBAT.[280] 14 Baloch (Reconnaissance and Support) Regiment, two engineer companies, one company Special Services Group, two wings Zhob Militia, one Mahsud battalion, one company Chenab Rangers, two platoons Azad Kashmir Rangers, two Mujahid battalions (twelve companies) and one anti-aircraft mujahid company were also placed under 23 Division for this operation. The artillery resources for this operation comprised four field regiments (11 and 39 had 25 pounders while 50 and 63 had 122 mm howitzers), 51 Composite Mountain Regiment having eight 105 mm pack and four 3.7-inch howitzers, 71 Mountain Regiment (105 mm pack) with 81 AK battery under command (eight 25 pounders) and two medium regiments (28 and 64 both had 155 mm howitzers).[281]

Leaving out World War 2 vintage Sherman's and M 36 tank busters, Pakistan had seventy-four T 59 tanks against ninety T 54/55 Indian tanks in Chhamb sector.[282] In artillery, there was relative parity. Pakistan had 130 guns of all calibres while Indians had 126 guns.[283]

Initially 191 Indian Brigade had deployed two battalions (5 Sikh and 5 Assam) west and two battalions (4/1 Gorkha and 10 Garhwal) east of River Munnawar Tawi. On 2 December, entire 191 Brigade was deployed west of Tawi. "5 Sikh with one squadron of 9 Deccan Horse in the north from Mandiala heights to point 994. 5 Assam with a platoon of ATGMs was deployed from Barsala to Jhanda with strong points at Moil, Bakan and

Burejal. 4/1 Gorkha with platoon ATGM was covering Munnawar approach."[284] 10 Garhwal was also in the area. 28 Brigade was deployed in the hills sector with 8 J&K Militia in point 707- Dewa- Nathan Tibia, 2 J&K Rifles in area Kalidhar and 5 Rajputs in depth. [285] Border posts were manned by 57 BSF Battalion.

On the Pakistani side, to meet the requirements of troops for Chhamb operation, Mirpur and Bhimber sectors were thinned out. 7 AK Brigade relieved 4 AK Brigade and occupied 43 miles long front from Kala Dab to Laleal with three regular battalions. 4 AK Brigade was given the responsibility to defend Chhamb sector from Par Batala to Bakan. 20 Brigade was deployed from Bakan to Mattewala including Nadala enclave. 66 and 111 Brigades were at Daulatnagar and Jalalpur Jattan respectively. 2 Armoured Brigade was at Assar. 23 Division planned the operation in four phases. 66 Brigade was to operate along axis Pir Jamal-Sandari and secure area up to 3 kilometres depth for subsequent employment of armour, commencing operation at 9 pm on 3 December and completing it by first light on 4 December. 111 Brigade was to operate along axis Padhar- Moil - Chhamb and secure area up to 3 kilometres depth for employment of armour commencing operation at 9 pm on 3 December and completing by first light on 4 December. 4 AK Brigade was tasked for a feint attack north of Laleal to assist 66 and 111 Brigades during phase 1. 20 Brigade was to undertake an offensive from south and advance towards Jhanda - Munnawar. 2 Armoured Brigade was placed as reserve at Assar. In the second phase, 11 Cavalry group (11 Cavalry and 4 Punjab) was to breakout from 66 Brigade bridgehead at first light on 4 December and cut road Dewa - Chhamb at Kamali Chhappar and secure area up to western end of Mandiala Bridge. 111 Brigade supported by a squadron of 26 Cavalry was to develop operations towards Khairowal and Malke Camp with a view to attracting enemy armour away from 11 Cavalry group. 4 AK and 20 Brigade were to continue exerting pressure. In phase 3, 66 Brigade was to establish itself in area Mandiala as soon as possible but not later than first light on 5

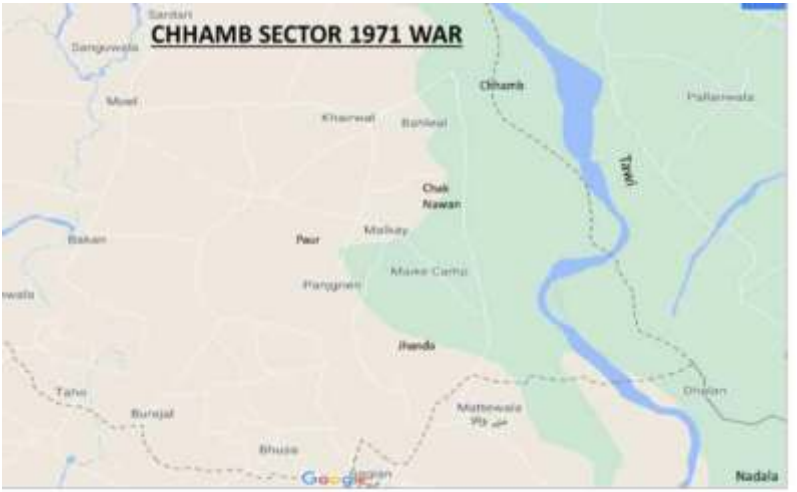
December and 111 Brigade was to capture Chak Pandit, Chhamb and Sakrana by first light on 5 December. In phase 4, 66 and 111 Brigades were to mop up all opposition in Chhamb area by last light on 5 December.[286]

66 and 111 Brigades commenced their operations at 9 pm and crossed the Cease Fire Line. 66 Brigade led by 33 FF and 23 Baloch secured phase 1 line being defended by 5 Sikh by 2 am on 4 December. In the 111 Brigade front, 3 FF captured Tutan Wali after a steady advance but 42 Punjab was held up against a platoon of 5 Sikh at Moil. In 20 Brigade, 14 Punjab reduced new Ghaui and Lakhu posts.[287] A and D companies of 17 FF were tasked to capture new Rana and Bhusa posts. The objectives were secured by 8:30 pm on 3 December.[288] In the north in 4 AK area, a company of 2 AK Battalion and a company of Zhob Militia were tasked to capture Mendhar feature which was 2000 yards northeast of Laleal. Company of Zhob Militia lost its company commander at the outset and withdrew. Company of 2 AK captured Mendhar feature but lost it by first light on 4 December due to enemy counter-attack. The two companies suffered 27 killed and 33 wounded in the action.[289]

On 4 December, 11 Cavalry group (11 Cavalry and 4 Punjab) broke out from the bridgehead provided by 66 Brigade at first light. 11 Cavalry group maneuvered through Kamali Chhappar along the banks of Sukh Tao to capture Mandiala heights. At 9 am, as the leading elements entered Gura 1500 yards west of Mandiala, they came under fire from Mandiala heights. Two companies of 5 Sikh, squadron 9 Deccan Horse and elements of ATGM Company were occupying Mandiala heights.290 At this stage two companies of 4 Punjab attacked Mandiala heights while squadron of 11 Cavalry provided fire support. After heavy fighting, Mandiala height's northern portion was captured and retained despite enemy counter attacks.

5 Sikh held onto Mandiala south. Indian 68 Brigade was ordered to move 8 Kumaon, a company of 9 Commando Group and a squadron of armour to area Buchohe Mandi to cover

Mandiala crossing. Pakistani artillery fire landed into advancing 8 Kumaon. The CO and 54 all ranks were killed. Leaderless, the unit failed to comply with the brigade orders. At this time, Mandiala crossing was being defended only by a company of 9 Commando Group. In 111 Brigade area, 42 Punjab was held up at Barsala high ground being defended by two companies of 5 Assam. 3 FF had captured Moil but the enemy had gained time to reorganize defences at point 994. In 20 Brigade area, 14 Punjab captured Burejal. At 11am on 4 December, 17 FF was tasked to capture Munnawar position by last light the same day. Munnawar was being defended by a company of 4/1 Gorkha.[291] A squadron of Sherman tanks was placed under command 17 FF less two companies. H hour was 3:30 pm. Lt Col Jafree, the CO of 17 FF led the attack. Short of objective, troops went to ground on encountering a mine field. Lt Col Jafree was killed by enemy fire and the attack failed.



Map 25.

Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

At this stage on 4 December, the GOC modified his offensive plan to hop across River Tawi and advance further east. In the modified plan, 4 AK Brigade was tasked to establish bridgehead across River Tawi in the vicinity of Mandiala by first light on 5 December. 28 Cavalry of 2 Armoured Brigade was tasked to breakout from the bridgehead at first light on 5 December to capture Pallanwala and go as far east as possible. 66 Brigade was ordered to relieve 11 Cavalry Group at Mandiala and secure west bank of River Tawi. 111 Brigade was to continue operations to capture Chhamb. 20 Brigade was ordered to continue offensive north ward to tie down maximum enemy.

Southern part of Buchohe Mandi was the initial objective of 4 AK Brigade. The brigade operation was planned in two phases. In first phase 6 and 13 AK battalions were to establish a bridgehead across River Tawi by first light on 5 December. Two companies of 47 Punjab and a squadron of 26 Cavalry were to be employed in second phase to expand the bridgehead. 6 AK was the left and 13 AK the right battalion during the attack. At 3 am, two forward companies of 13 AK crossed River Tawi and took Indians by complete surprise.[292] The two companies of 13 AK had hit the two forward batteries of Indian 216 Medium Regiment and two companies of 7 Kumaon. Due to preparatory bombardment in the area by Pakistan Artillery and surprise attack by troops of 13 AK, there was complete confusion among Indian troops. The commanding officer and four officers of 7 Kumaon were wounded. The battalion fell back. The depth medium battery of 216 Medium Regiment had to fire over open sites damaging some of the guns of forward batteries.[293] At 5 am on 5 December, 4 AK Brigade informed Division HQ that Buchohe Mandi spur on far bank had been captured along with half destroyed Mandiala bridge. 111 Brigade's advance was still stalled north of point 994. Troops of 66 Brigade were preparing to launch an attack at south Mandiala held by 5 Sikh. GOC 23 Division issued orders for Squadron of 11 Cavalry to immediately cross River Tawi and stabilise the bridgehead, squadron 28 cavalry to advance on

Sakrana and 66 Brigade to move across River Tawi from Mandiala and establish a firm base. Situation had turned precarious in the brigade head for the two companies of 13 AK. 6 AK had failed to cross the river and brigade phase two had not been launched.[294] Indian 9 Jat and A squadron of 72 Armoured Regiment counter-attacked the weakly held bridgehead and managed to evict the two companies of 13 AK from the eastern side of River Tawi.[295] After the loss of bridgehead, GOC 23 Division once again modified his plans. New orders were issued at 12 am on 5 December. As per new plan, bulk of armour was to be shifted to the south during night of 5-6 December under 2 Armoured Brigade for attacking the Chhamb salient from the south to north on 6 December. 4 Punjab and 23 Baloch were shifted to 2 Armoured Brigade from 66 Brigade. 4 AK Brigade reinforced with 33 FF was tasked to clear south Mandiala. 111 Brigade was tasked to capture Chhamb. 20 Brigade was to simulate an attack from Nadala enclave.

111 Brigade was ordered to capture point 994 by last light on 5 December. 10 Baloch with a squadron of armour was given this task. Attack was to be launched at 4:30 pm. 10 Baloch captured Uprali Banian but could not secure point 994. During the night of 5-6 December, Brig Babur the commander artillery was given the command of 111 Brigade. At 5 am, the new Brigade Commander gave orders for another attack on Phagla ridge. 3 FF with two armour squadrons and a company of R&S were tasked to capture point 994. The attack started at 6 am. Brig Babur accompanied the assaulting troops. He was injured by Indian artillery fire and evacuated. He was awarded SJ for his act of bravery. The assaulting troops captured point 994. However, Indians launched a counter-attack by a company of 5/8 Gorkha[296] supported by two troops of 9 Horse and recaptured it.[297]

Despite all difficulties, the movement and regrouping of 2 Armoured Brigade was successfully done during the night of 5-6 December. On 6 December, 2 Armoured Brigade attacked the salient from the south in two columns. Northern column comprised 4 Punjab and a squadron of 26 Cavalry with task to

capture Barsala and then advance to Chak Pandit to join the southern column. Southern column comprised 2 Armoured Brigade group, 28 Cavalry, a squadron of 11 Cavalry, 23 Baloch and an R&S company with the task to capture Chak Pandit.[298]

Northern column's advance led by 4 Punjab commenced at 6 am. Facing them were Barsala and Jhanda, being defended by a company each of 5 Assam and 4/1 Gorkha. About 2000 yards short of Barsala and Jhanda, the group was stopped by mines and enemy artillery fire. One tank was hit. Northern column halted south of enemy mine field. Brigade commander ordered 28 Cavalry to charge through the mine field. The charge unhinged the enemy and Chak Pandit was captured at 5 pm on 6 December.[299]

In 4 AK Brigade, 6 AK with a squadron of 11 Cavalry attacked Mandiala South at 2 pm on 6 December. The objective being defended by 5 Sikh was captured by 5:30 pm.[300] Around evening of 6 December, under heavy pressure from all sides, commander Indian 191 Brigade ordered his battalions to withdraw and take up defensive positions around Chhamb. As there were no prepared positions in the area, therefore GOC 10 Indian Division ordered 191 Brigade to withdraw east of Tawi during night of 6-7 December.[301]

At 2 am on 7 December, Brig Abdullah Malik and Brig Kamal Matin-ud-Did arrived in Padhar to take over 111 Brigade and Divisional artillery respectively.[302]

At 3 am on 7 December, a company of 2 AK was ordered to make another attempt to capture Laleal feature. About 100 yards short of the objective, the company commander was killed. The company lost 24 killed and 29 wounded. Company commander was awarded Sitara-i-Jurat (SJ) and the observer got Tamgha-i-Jurat (TJ).[303] Due to heavy casualties the attack was called off.[304]

At first light on 7 December, 111 Brigade advanced from the west and 2 Armoured Brigade approached Chhamb from the south. The place was kept under heavy bombardment from 6 am

onwards. The Indians had already vacated the area. Both brigades reached Chhamb at 9 am.[305]

At 2 pm 7 December, Gen Iftekhar flew into Chhamb. At 3:30 pm, he issued orders for attack across River Tawi. According to the plan, 111 Brigade group was tasked to capture Khaur and establish a firm base across River Tawi. 2 Armoured Brigade was tasked to capture Pallanwala. 66 Brigade was to relieve 111 Brigade after last light on 7 December. 4 AK Brigade had to capture Laleal post. H-hour for the attack was fixed at 5 pm on 7 December. Commander 2 Armoured Brigade pointed to inadequacy of time for preparation but the GOC did not change the timings.

At 7 pm Commander 2 Armoured Brigade delivered his orders. 23 Baloch was tasked to make bridgehead across River Tawi. H-hour was postponed to 1 am on 8 December. Till 0:30 am, Brig Sardar, Commander 2 Armoured Brigade and Lt Col Dogar, Commanding Officer 28 Cavalry waited for infantry to turn up. Artillery bombardment started at 0:30 am as scheduled and continued till 1:30 am when it was stopped. The attack was postponed till 6 am on 8 December. At 5 am on 8 December, 23 Baloch formed up near Chamreal. The leading two companies led by the CO crossed the river.[306] The area was being defended by 10 Garhwal. A platoon locality was captured but they were soon counter-attacked and evicted.[307] 23 Baloch lost 10 killed and 21 wounded. At this stage, Gen Iftekhar called off the attack and ordered Commander 111 Brigade to make plans for capturing Pallanwala. Commander 111 Brigade requested that H-hour should not be before last light on 9 December. The General agreed. At this stage, a tank regiment was ordered by GHQ to be withdrawn from 23 Division.[308] On 8 December, 111 Brigade captured a few hill features including important Dewa ridge.[309] The attack on Dewa was carried out by 6 AK Battalion. At 4 pm on 9 December, GOC 23 Division flew to meet Commander 111 Brigade to coordinate attack on Pallanwala. His helicopter met an accident while landing near HQ 111 Brigade, three kilometres

southwest of Chhamb. He was evacuated to CMH Kharian.[310] Brig Kamal Matin ud Din, the Commander Artillery assumed command of 23 Division. He ordered attack across River Tawi to continue. During the night of 9-10 December, after an intense artillery fire by the bulk of available artillery, 4 Punjab and 10 Baloch crossed River Tawi at 2 am. 4 Punjab and 10 Baloch were able to gain a foothold across Tawi.[311] After securing a foothold in 9 Jat area, Pakistani troops attacked 10 Garhwal company from the north and overran it. First counter-attack was beaten back. Moving forward, the depth company of 9 Jat was also overrun. At about 8 am on 10 December, Indians launched a counter attack by 3/4 Gorkha rifles less two companies and elements of 9 Horse and 72 Armoured Regiment. The tanks got bogged down and infantry could only close up to 900 meters from the objective. GOC 10 Indian Division got jittery due to failure of counter-attack. He started planning withdrawal to Troti area in the rear. Artillery reconnaissance parties were instructed to move to Troti position. At this critical stage, Commander Indian 15 Corps intervened. 10 Division was forbidden to withdraw and reinforced with an armoured regiment and a company of 7 Grenadiers.[312]

At 6 am 10 December, Maj Gen Iftikhar breathed his last at CMH Kharian. On the Pakistani side, at 7 am 10 December, CO 28 Cavalry took the leading tanks across river Tawi. As he was getting the tanks organized for assault, an enemy shell landed nearby and injured him. At 12:30 pm, 28 Cavalry reported heavy losses. At the same time information was relayed by GHQ that a large enemy tank and infantry force was moving towards Jaurian. (Most probably the armoured regiment and a company of 7 Grenadiers released by HQ 15 Indian Corps to 10 Division) The situation appeared to be precarious at HQ 23 Pakistani Division. 111 Brigade had failed to launch second phase of the bridgehead. The troops inside the bridgehead were under great pressure from all sides. Information relayed by GHQ further complicated the situation. Not knowing that Indian 10 Division was contemplating withdrawal, the Acting GOC 23 Division knowing his own

vulnerabilities decided to withdraw bridgehead troops at 2 pm on 10 December. That was the end of Pakistan's effort to capture Akhnur.[313]

Not knowing that 23 Division had decided to withdraw from bridgehead, Commander Indian 15 Corps arrived in HQ 10 Division at 3:20 pm and assumed charge of the situation. He ordered elements of 52 and 68 Brigades to counter attack the Pakistani bridgehead on night 10-11 December. The counter attack was launched on areas already vacated by Pakistan army and they secured it by 0:30 am on 11 December.[314]

On 11 December, Maj Gen Ghulam Umar took over command of 23 Division. The new task given to the division was to consolidate and defend line of River Tawi.

OPERATIONS IN RAVI – CHENAB CORRIDOR

India expected Pakistan to launch its riposte in the Western Theatre in either Jammu and Kashmir or in Punjab. One such area was opposite Shakargarh salient. Area around Madhupur Head works, through which the rail and road communications pass, could isolate entire Jammu and Kashmir. Therefore, elimination of Shakargarh salient was an important strategic objective for India. Pasrur was a nodal point in this salient. From Indian view point, early capture of Pasrur would result in not only eliminating the Shakargarh salient, but also facilitate development of further operations towards Sialkot, Gujranwala and Lahore. Indians therefore planned a major offensive against the salient. For Indians, Pasrur could be approached from three directions, i.e., between Aik Nullah and Degh Nadi, between Degh Nadi and Bein River and from across the Ravi River in the east.[315] The first option was exercised in the 1965 war and the third option involved crossing of a major water obstacle. That left them with option two i.e., between Degh Nadi and Bein River. Indian 1 Corps responsible for this offensive was located in cantonments in central and southern India. Only one infantry division i.e., 39 Division was available in the area and was under command 15

Corps. 1 Corps moved to its operational area in mid-October 1971.[316]

Indian 1 Corps was tasked to capture Shakargarh salient. 54 Infantry Division with 16 Independent armoured Brigade less 16 Cavalry was tasked to advance between Degh Nadi and Karir stream to capture Laisar Kalan-Bari-Darman, then Supwal and Barwal, and then be prepared to capture Deoli and Mirzapur. 39 Infantry Division comprising 72 Infantry Brigade of 36 Division (of four battalions including 1 Mahar of 115 Infantry Brigade) and 2 Independent armoured Brigade less 14 Horse was to advance between Karir stream and Bein River and capture Shakargarh. 36 Infantry Division less 72 Infantry Brigade and 14 Horse were to advance across the river Ravi on axis Thakurpur- Nainakot-Nurkot and capture Nurkot; thereafter it was to be prepared to assist 39 Infantry Division to capture Shakargarh.[317]

On the Pakistani side, 1 Corps, commanded by Lt Gen Irshad Ahmed Khan, was responsible for the defence of Shakargarh salient ensuring denial of Marala Headworks, Sialkot, Pasrur, Narowal, Marala Ravi Link Canal, Jassar crossing and Raya crossing. Lt Gen Irshad appreciated that Indians would launch their main offensive between Degh nadi and River Bein using 3 to 4 infantry divisions and 2 to 3 armoured brigades.[318] Accordingly the defence was planned. 1 Corps comprised 8 and 15 Divisions, both located at Sialkot, and 8 Independent armoured Brigade, located at Kharian. 15 Division was tasked to defend area from Marala Headworks to Degh Nadi inclusive. 8 Division was responsible to defend Shakargarh salient from Degh nadi to Marala Ravi Link Canal (MRL) -Bambanwala Ravi Bedian Link Canal (BRBL) sub-link in the South. 88 Brigade was responsible to defend area from MRL- BRBL sub-link to Ravi siphon. 8 Independent armoured Brigade was to act as reserve and was located in area Shah Gharib, Dhamthal.[319] In addition to defending the given area, 1 Corps (8 Division) was also responsible to capture Dharam enclave at the outbreak of hostilities and

command Army Strategic Reserves North (6 Armoured Division and 17 Infantry Division). 1 Corps was therefore expected to coordinate defensive as well as offensive operations by the strategic reserves i.e., tasks requiring two Corps HQs.[320]

8 Division had to defend a front of approximately 120,000 yards. It had three brigades i.e., 14, 24 and 115 Infantry Brigades. 124 Brigade joined it on 14 December 71. 8 Division was tasked to defend area of responsibility from Degh Nadi to MRL – BRBL sub-link canal, denying line Zafarwal – Shakargarh – Narowal at all cost. Defend Pasrur, Shakargarh, Narowal and Zafarwal as strong points. Capture Dharam enclave at the outbreak of hostilities. Be prepared to launch counter attack / counter offensive in certain areas, with under command 8 Armoured Brigade. 115 Brigade was tasked to defend Narowal sector. Its area of responsibility was sub-divided into three-sub sectors, namely; the Narowal, Raya and Mirowal. Narowal sub-sector starting from Basantar – Ravi Junction to including Narowal was being defended by 38 Punjab (left) and 35 Punjab (right). Raya sub-sector was being defended by a composite force of 2 companies of 34 FF and two platoons of Chenab Rangers. Mirowal sub-sector was defended by a composite force of a company of 21 Baloch (Recce & Support), two platoons of Chenab Rangers and three platoons of Mujahids.[321]

14 Para Brigade was responsible to defend Shakargarh sector from excluding Cho Nullah to including Waraich right up to border having main defences in general area Shakargarh – Nurkot and defending Shakargarh and Nurkot as strong points. It was also tasked to be prepared to occupy Dudaas counter penetration position and be prepared to defend Pasrur as a fortress.[322]

24 Brigade was deployed on the left covering a frontage of about 15000 yards in the Zafarwal sector from Sakror bund to Karir nadi. 24 Brigade planned to occupy an advance position with a company in area Lagwal and take up main defensive position from Degh to Cho nullah. The brigade deployed 11 Baloch with

under command a company from 40 Punjab and Chenab Rangers along Sakror Bund up to and including Ghazipur. 24 Punjab, with under command a company of 40 Punjab and a troop tanks of 11 Independent armoured squadron was holding area around Azizpur up to and including Jarpal. 40 Punjab less two companies was deployed for defence of Zafarwal town. Company Recce and Support was deployed in the inter battalion gap between 11 Baloch and 24 Punjab in area Suraj Chak and Jarpal.[323]

Till 27 November, the three brigades were responsible for covering troop's battle in their own areas. Thereafter, it was decided to form a separate force called Changez Force to conduct covering troop's battle. Changez (Nisar) Force comprised Corps Recce Regiment (20 Lancers), an armour regiment (33 Cavalry), infantry battalion (23 FF) and two companies R&S (13 Punjab). Its mission was to fight as covering troops from international border in the north till line Zafarwal – Shakargarh by operating within the corridor formed by Basanter Nullah on the left and Bein River on the right and cause maximum delay and attrition to the enemy. Against the envisaged onslaught of two Indian infantry divisions supported by an armoured brigade minus each, covering troops were deployed in two layers. 20 Lancers was to take up delaying positions at the first minefield. 33 Cavalry was to cover second layer of defensive minefield.[324]

Elements of 124 Brigade ex 33 Division (11 Punjab and a company R&S) were placed under command 8 Division on 11 December and remaining troops of this brigade formed part of 1 Corps reserve. On 14 December, complete 124 Brigade was placed under command 8 Division and formed divisional reserve.[325]

15 Division's mission was to defend area between river Chenab and Degh Nadi, denying line Jura, Gul Bahar, Nikki Patesar, Kalarawanda, Bhagowal- Phallurah and Kishanpur. The units and formations were ordered to occupy the defensive positions on 22 November 1971. 104 Brigade comprising 36 Punjab 7 Baloch and

37 FF, was deployed with three battalions up, from Chumbian salient on the left to Aik nullah on the right. 101 Brigade comprising 30 Baloch and 29 Punjab was deployed with both battalions up from Aik nullah to Mastpur. One company of 42 Baloch was under command 30 Baloch. 10 Brigade comprising 35 Baloch, 5 Baloch and a company of 42 Baloch was deployed from Mastpur to Degh nadi. 42 Baloch less two companies was deployed in depth. 54 Brigade was located in area Libbe as divisional reserve. The reserve had been split in two parts.



Map 26.
Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

Divisional reserve south was located at Libbe and comprised 54 Brigade, 27 FF less a company and 32 Cavalry less a squadron. Divisional reserve north was located at Marikiwal Rakh under 37 Baloch and consisted of a company of 37 Baloch, company of 27

FF and a squadron of 32 Cavalry. Out of 17 platoons of Rangers, 13 platoons were concentrated in Pukhlian salient, named as Salim Force. 34 Baloch under direct control of Divisional Headquarters was deployed at Marala Headworks and called Mohsin Force.[326]

Indian 1 Corps was deployed around Shakargarh salient with three infantry divisions. 54 Infantry Division was concentrated between Degh nadi and River Bein. 39 Infantry Division (four brigades) with its Headquarters at Jasrota was deployed from River Bein to River Ravi (Madhopur Headworks). 36 Infantry Division with its Headquarters at Dinanagar was covering general area Pathankot, Dinanagar and Gurdaspur. X-Ray Sector was covering area between Aik nullah and Degh nadi. X- Ray sector comprised a brigade each from 26 and 39 Divisions. 1 and 16 Armoured Brigades were located at Dinanagar and Rajbagh respectively.

At the outbreak of hostilities on 3 December, Pakistani 1 Corps launched an operation to capture Dharam enclave. It was named as Operation Dajla. Dharam was an Indian enclave west of river Ravi and opposite Narowal. It measured 5000 by 9000 yards and was covered with 12 feet high elephant grass. It could be used as a bridgehead by Indian army for any operation towards Narowal.[327] 115 Brigade of 8 Division was the holding brigade in Narowal sector. As Dharam enclave was in the area of 115 Brigade, therefore it was assigned the task to capture it. The brigade was reinforced by additional infantry and artillery for the operation. 115 Brigade comprised 38 Punjab, 35 Punjab and 34 FF.

Three battalions were employed to capture Dharam enclave. 27 Punjab from 14 Para Brigade was tasked to secure river line and ferry site. 20 Punjab again from 14 Para Brigade was tasked to attack Dharam. 38 Punjab was to carry out feint attack on enemy post Charagh Naghli. 35 Punjab was tasked to relieve 27 Punjab when the later moved to 15 Division area. H hour for the capture of Dharam enclave was fixed as 9:30 pm on night 3-4 December.

27 Punjab attacked from almost north to south from the direction of Kotli Bajwa towards the boat bridge. Phase 1 of 27 Punjab was completed by 0:25 am.[328] Around 1 am, 4 December, 20 Punjab passed through 27 Punjab and went for Dharam Boat Bridge. At 6 am, 4 December, when 20 Punjab was about 1000 yards short of Boat Bridge, Indian troops started firing with a machine gun from two hay stacks. The troops of 20 Punjab attacked the hay stacks with hand grenades. Five Indian soldiers were killed and three captured. Dharam enclave was captured by 8 am.

At 10 pm, 4 December, 27 Punjab was relieved by 35 Punjab. 27 Punjab moved to 15 Division. 34 FF relieved 20 Punjab which moved to Nurkot south of Shakargarh under 14 Para Brigade.[329]

During night 5-6 December, Indians attacked Pakistani Jassar enclave (also called Dera Baba Nanak enclave). The enclave could be used by Pakistan army to launch an offensive in the northern Indian Punjab. Indian 11 Corps had tasked 86 Infantry Brigade (15 Division) to eliminate Jassar enclave at the outset of the war. 86 Brigade was supported by 71 Armoured Regiment and 21 Independent artillery Brigade. On the Pakistani side, the enclave was being defended by a company of 38 Punjab and some Rangers. Indians attacked the enclave with overwhelming strength on night 5-6 December and captured it by 6 am, 6 December.[330]

Pakistan had initiated hostilities in the Western sector in the evening of 3 December. Reacting quickly, Indian Army HQ ordered its Western Command to launch 1 Corps for offensive task within 48 hours. (Pakistan should have given such an order to its 2 Corps if it wanted results in 1971 war). Indian 1 Corps planned to launch its main effort between Degh Nadi and River Bein with two infantry divisions plus a brigade (54 and 39) supported by two armoured brigades less two armoured regiments (16 and 2) with a view to capturing Zafarwal and Shakargarh before developing the operation to depth areas. (Major flaw with the main effort was that its two divisions supported by an armoured brigade each were

pursuing objectives on divergent axes). Supporting the main effort was the auxiliary effort by 36 Infantry Division less a brigade supported by additional armoured regiment (14 Horse ex 2 Armoured Brigade) to advance across River Ravi on axis Thakurpur- Nainakot- Nurkot with a view to capturing Nurkot and later assist 39 Division to capture Shakargarh. In the main effort of Indian 1 Corps, 54 and 39 Infantry Divisions moved to their firm bases in areas Galar, Raipur, Raiyan and Londi, during night 4-5 December. The concentration was completed before day break on 5 December.[331] 54 Division was to carry out its operation in ten phases. Initially the border out posts were to be captured and area up to minefields was to be secured. Then a bridgehead was to be established across the mine field. After clearing area up to Basantar a bridgehead across it had to be established. Then the Supwal ditch (called Sakror bund in Pakistan) was to be captured, then regrouping was to be done for capturing of Zafarwal and then Zafarwal, Raiyan and Dhamthal were to be captured.

39 Division planned its operations in five phases. Initially, it was to eliminate the BOPs, then it had to establish a bridgehead in area Harar Khurd, then Harar Kalan was to be captured, then Dehlra was to be captured, then Pakistani covering troops south of Dehlra –Chak Amru were to be destroyed and then Shakargarh was to be invested and subsequently captured. Both the divisions were to cross the border at 8 pm on 5 December.[332]

Facing the onslaught of 54 and 39 Indian Divisions and two armoured brigades was the Pakistani Changez Force under Brig Nisar Ahmed, who as CO of 25 Cavalry had played a decisive role in blunting the same Indian 1 Corps offensive West of Degh Nadi in 1965 war.[333] Mission of this Force was to delay enemy forces advancing between Basantar nullah and River Bein for 24 hours at the first position being manned by 20 Lancers and for 48 hours at the second position being manned by 33 Cavalry. 20 Lancers commanded by Lt Col Muhammad Tufail deployed B squadron at Dandout and Wadala Guarana, C squadron at Baher and

Giddarpur, and A squadron at Khaira. 33 Cavalry commanded by Lt Col Abdur Rehman was deployed on second minefield from Lagwal to Nathal Khurd. 13 Punjab less a company occupied position at Tola.[334] 20 Lancers had thirty-five, World War 2 vintage Sherman II tanks having 76 mm guns. 33 Cavalry had forty-one M 47 tanks with 90 mm guns. Indian armoured regiments operating against Changez Force had T- 55 tanks with 100 mm guns and Centurion tanks with 120 mm guns.[335]

Changez Force was operating on a front of 18,000 yards. At 7 pm on 3 December 20 Lancers took up delaying position. B squadron took up position at Dandout as the first minefield was about six kilometres away from the international border.

At first light on 5 December, Indians destroyed observation tower ahead of Dandout to deny deep observation to Pakistani observers. Throughout 5 December, Pakistani artillery observers picked up Indian tanks moving towards international border. All these movements were engaged by artillery fire.

Indian preparatory bombardment started at 7 pm followed by armour and infantry attacks against Chak Jangu, Dandout and Sukhmal. Indian 47 Brigade (54 Division) along with 4 Horse crossed the border at 8 pm on 5 December. The advance of 39 Indian Division was led by 7 Cavalry. B squadron of Pakistani 20 Lancers at Dandout was soon out-flanked from both the directions. At 9 pm the squadron withdrew to its position behind first minefield at Tarapur- Thakurdwara, completing the move by 11 pm.[336] By the morning of 6 December, both the Indian divisions had contacted the first mine field.

On 6 December, 47 Indian Brigade and 4 Horse started phase two i.e., to establish a bridgehead across the first minefield in area Thakurdwara- Nagwal and then breakout to contact the depth minefield. 4 Horse trawled the Thakurdwara minefield in the evening and got across by 5:45 pm on 6 December.[337] 47 Brigade and 4 Horse after breaching the first minefield started bypassing B squadron of 20 Lancers from the west. B squadron was therefore

forced to withdraw behind second minefield. This exposed the western flank of 20 Lancers thus forcing A and C squadrons also to withdraw to second minefield. As per plan, 20 Lancers had to withdraw to third minefield but as delay and attrition at first minefield was less than planned, therefore it was ordered to strengthen the defences of 33 Cavalry at second minefield. A squadron was placed in the depth of C squadron of 33 Cavalry. B squadron was placed in a gap between A and B squadrons of 33 Cavalry. C squadron was placed in a gap between B and C squadrons of 33 Cavalry.[338] On 7 December, 4 Horse contacted second minefield and also captured Sukror.

39 Indian Division captured border out posts at Sukmal, Bhopalpur and Lamriyal by 11:30 pm on 5 December. Thereafter advance by 7 Cavalry and 3 Sikh Light Infantry was effectively checked at the first minefield.[339] During night 6-7 December, 20 Lancers had to withdraw to second minefield due to reasons explained above. It greatly facilitated the advance of 7 Cavalry and second minefield was contacted after clearance of Giddarpur and Chak Nahar by first light on 7 December.[340]

In the evening of 7 December, Indians tried to breach the minefield. A squadron of 20 Lancers frustrated the enemy. During the night, gaps in the minefield were closed.[341]

On 8 December, in the area of 39 Division, 72 Infantry Brigade captured Chak Amru by 3:30 pm. In the area of 54 Division, 74 Brigade could not reach Darman and therefore its western flank was exposed. A squadron of 33 Cavalry had delayed the advance of 74 Brigade towards Darman. Changez Force tanks at Chakra opened up against enemy's eastern flank. 74 Brigade was therefore ordered to move to Dodwan Kalan and capture Dehlra-Chakra. Dehlra - Chakra position was being defended by a squadron of 20 Lancers and a company of 13 Punjab. 74 Brigade supported by a squadron of 4 Horse managed to clear Chakra by 1 am and Dehlra by 5 am on 11 December.[342] At last light on 10 December, 33 Cavalry reported Indian tanks in front of Harar

Kalan and Khurd. Immediately after last light, Indians started preparatory bombardment. At 10 pm, Indian tanks cleared the minefield.[343] 72 Infantry Brigade of 39 Division captured Harar Kalan by 11 pm on 10 December and Munan by 5 am on 11 December. [344]

At 3 am on 11 December, Brig Nisar ordered Changez Force to pull back behind the main position. Commander A Squadron 20 Lancers received orders to withdraw from Loharan after last light on 11 December. The route of withdrawal was at one place flanked by Barkhaniya forest, where the Indians had T 55 tanks and recoilless rifles. As A squadron passed Barkhaniya they were hit by Indian tanks and recoilless rifles. The squadron lost two tanks; the remainder took hull down positions and traded shots with the enemy. Thereafter under cover of artillery fire A squadron withdrew to their new positions.

Brig Nisar had been ordered to delay Indians for 24 hours at the first position, and 48 hours at the second position. In actual battle, Indians were delayed for seven days. Nisar fought T 55 and Centurion tanks with M 47s and Shermans.

The auxiliary effort of Indian 1 Corps comprising 36 Division less a brigade and an additional armour regiment planned to use Lasian bulge (called Kukkar enclave in Pakistan) as a jump off point. Then capture Nainakot and Nurkot. Accordingly, Indian 115 Brigade was inducted into Lasian bulge from night 4-5 to night 7-8 December.

Opposing 36 Indian Division was 14 Brigade of 8 Pakistani Division. 14 Brigade had deployed one infantry battalion (19 FF) in Shakargarh covering approach from Ikhlaspur. Second battalion (27 Punjab) was at Nurkot covering Nainakot approach and third battalion was deployed northwest of Shakargarh covering approaches from the north. Some tanks of 28 Cavalry and 21 Baloch were acting as covering troops on Ikhlaspur and Nainakot approaches.

Indian 36 Division started its offensive at 11 pm on night 8-9 December by establishing a bridgehead in Pakistani territory up to Karwal and Nargal by 3:30 pm on 9 December. 9 and 14 Horse broke out from this bridgehead and encircled Sujowal by evening of 10 December. On 11 December, 14 Horse captured Sultanpur and later Nainakot by 1:25 pm. Simultaneously 87 Infantry Brigade crossed international border northeast of Ikhlaspur and captured Inayatpur by first light on 10 December. Seeing the progress of auxiliary effort and resistance in front of the main effort, Commander 1 Indian Corps shifted 2 Armoured Brigade from 39 Division to the auxiliary effort under 36 Division on 11 December. On 12 December, 14 Horse contacted east bank of River Bein i.e., the main defences of 14 Infantry Brigade. The covering troops delayed the auxiliary effort for almost four days. During night 13-14 December, 4 Grenadiers attacked area between 19 FF and 27 Punjab. One infantry company of 4 Grenadiers managed to cross River Bein. 27 Punjab counter attacked this company and made them prisoners. Thereafter, Indian 87 and 115 Brigades planned an attack on Shakargarh on night 14/15 December. While the Indian battalions were assembling for attack, they were picked by artillery observer with 14 Brigade. Fire of all artillery in range was brought onto the Indian battalions. Due to this fire, the Indian infantry battalions got disorganised and the attack could not be launched.[345] Thereafter the front stabilised till ceasefire on 17 December.

In the area of the main effort of Indian 1 Corps, Pakistani main defences were contacted on 11 December. Indian 1 Corps carried out reorganization at this stage due to slow progress of 39 Division. HQ 39 Division was moved to Ramgarh sector to coordinate defence against expected offensive by Pakistani 6 Armoured and 17 Infantry Divisions. 72 Brigade was placed under 54 Division. 2 Armoured Brigade was shifted to auxiliary effort under 36 Division.[346]

On 14 December, Indian 54 Division was spread along the line

Darman- Basantar -Ramri -Dusri -Channi Brahmana- River Bein. At this time, 54 Division planned to establish a bridgehead across Basantar on night 15-16 December with 47 Brigade and breakout with 16 Armoured Brigade supported by 74 Brigade to secure Sakror ditch (called Supwal ditch by Indians). Commencing operation at 7:30 pm on 15 December, 16 Madras captured northern portion of Lalial forest. 3 Grenadiers secured Jarpal - Lohal by 3 am on 16 December. 17 Horse started moving into the bridgehead at 2:30 am and captured Saraj Chak.[347] Jarpal and Barapind were being defended by a company of 24 Punjab (24 Brigade) under a Bengali officer. When 17 Horse attacked Saraj Chak the Bengali company commander deserted to the enemy. Without its commander, the company left its position when attacked. At 3:20 am a company each of 11 Baloch and 40 Punjab counter-attacked the northern portion of the bridgehead but failed due to stiff enemy resistance. Next, 24 Brigade ordered company 40 Punjab located at Zafarwal along with 11 Independent armoured squadron to counter attack and capture Barapind. At 7 am on 16 December, this force attacked Barapind. Finding no enemy, B Company of 40 Punjab occupied the abandoned defences of company of 24 Punjab. At 7:30 am on 16 December the bridgehead of 47 Indian Brigade was being contained in the north by a company of 11 Baloch, western portion by a company of 40 Punjab in area Ghazipur and by B Company of 40 Punjab along with some tanks in the south.[348]

During night 15-16 December, GOC 8 Pakistani Division was monitoring the establishment of a bridgehead by Indian 47 Brigade across the main defences of 24 Brigade. By early morning, he realised that the size of the bridgehead was beyond the capability of his reserves. Therefore at 4:30 am the GOC after obtaining clearance from Commander 1 Pakistani Corps, ordered 8 Independent armoured Brigade to eliminate Indian bridgehead across Basantar as soon as possible.

8 Independent Armoured Brigade Group being commanded by Brig Mohammed Ahmed was 1 Corps reserve with the task of

being prepared to destroy any enemy penetration along a front of approximately 180,000 yards from Pukhlian in the north through Shakargarh-Narowal to Raya Khas in the south. The brigade had two armour units equipped with M 47 and M 48 tanks, an infantry battalion and an artillery unit.[349]

At 5 am on 14 December, brigade major of the armoured brigade, told second-in-command of 13 Lancers that the enemy had breached the last minefield. Commanding Officer of 13 Lancers was called to HQ 24 Infantry Brigade for orders. Commander 8 Armoured Brigade had already gone to HQ 24 Brigade. Meanwhile the second in command of 13 Lancer was to move the regiment to Jarpal. Commander 24 Brigade informed CO 13 Lancers that enemy strength at Jarpal consisted of a troop of tanks and approximately one infantry company.

At 6:30 am on 16 December, Commander 8 Armoured Brigade briefed CO 13 Lancers. CO 61 (SP) Field Regiment was not called to attend the briefing. Enemy strength in the bridgehead was estimated to be approximately one squadron of tanks and an infantry battalion.[350] 13 Lancers was tasked to attack and capture home side of the minefield. Direction of attack was from northwest.[351] 27 and 31 Cavalry were in reserve. 13 Lancers completed its move to forward assembly area by 7:45 am on 16 December.

Indian bridgehead was within the range of sixteen Pakistani artillery batteries including six field, eight medium and two heavy batteries. Unfortunately, only 61 (SP) Field Regiment was used to support the operation of 8 Armoured brigade.[352]

Commander 8 Armoured Brigade directed that one squadron of 13 Lancers (Alpha squadron) to take counter penetration position west of village Jarpal. The rest of 13 Lancers was to attack from Barapind as their forming up place. While these orders were being executed, Indian 17 Horse deployed in the northern portion of the bridgehead while consolidating its position moved a few tanks towards 11 Baloch deployed on Sakror Bund.

Assuming that Sakror bund position was being out-flanked, commander 24 Brigade asked 8 Armoured Brigade for help. A squadron of 13 Lancers was immediately diverted to Ghazipur to contest the emerging armour threat. At 8 am, as A squadron reached near Sikanderpur it drew intense tank, anti-tank and anti-tank guided missile fire from Ghazipur. The squadron formed on the move and charged at the enemy forcing them into forest along Basantar. The squadron suffered heavy casualties and lost eight tanks. B and C squadrons while moving to their forming up place in Barapind were similarly hit by enemy tanks, and anti-tank weapons deployed in Barapind. In B squadron, five tanks were burnt and four were damaged. In C squadron three tanks were burnt, four were damaged and two developed mechanical faults.[353] In the process enemy withdrew north of Barapind.[354]

At 12 pm, Commander 8 Armoured Brigade ordered 31 Cavalry to attack from the direction of Marara, in a gap between A and C squadrons of 13 Lancers. 13 Lancers only came to know about this attack when 31 Cavalry tanks started bursting into flames due to enemy fire. After loss of ten tanks the attack was called off and the regiment went into counter penetration around Marara. Thus by 2 pm the counter-attack by 8 Armoured Brigade came to an end without making any appreciable dent in enemy bridgehead.[355] The last attack in the area of 8 Division was carried out by 35 FF on night 16-17 December. 35 FF had left Quetta on 4 December as part of 124 Brigade (33 Division). From 9 to 13 December, it moved half a dozen times. On 13 December, 124 Brigade with its affiliated 62 Field Regiment reached Pasrur under command of 1 Corps. On 14 December, 124 Brigade was placed under 8 Division. 35 FF was detached and placed under 115 Brigade. In 115 Brigade while the unit was relieving 34 FF it was reverted to 124 Brigade. On 16 December, 35 FF was ordered to concentrate near village Pindi Purbian. At 8 pm Lt Col Akram, the CO of 35 FF, was summoned to HQ 124 Brigade and ordered to capture Jarpal. The attack was to go before first light. Jarpal was being defended by 3 Grenadiers and an armour regiment. The

hasty manner in which the whole operation was put together invited disaster. H hour was changed for the third time to 5:30 am. Therefore, the crossing of start line by 35 FF and the timing of fire plan did not synchronize. CO 35 FF was given little time for reconnaissance, planning and preparation of attack. He tried to make up for these short-coming by personally leading the attack. The battalion came under fire immediately after it crossed the start line. The CO was cut down by machine gun fire. The battalion lost 65 killed and 58 wounded. After seven hours, 35 FF was withdrawn to its old position in Pindi Purbian.[356]

Operations in RCC were characterized by indecisiveness resulting in ever changing orders. In Operation Dajla (Capture of Dharam enclave) attack by two infantry battalions was supported by more than 21 artillery batteries. Success was achieved with least number of casualties. The Changez Force was supported by more than twelve artillery batteries. Every squadron had an observer. In the case of counter-attack by 8 Armoured Brigade, for unknown reasons, fire support was ignored. Commander Corps Artillery and CO of DS regiment, were not involved in the planning of the attack. Consequently, although sixteen artillery batteries were in range, hardly any was used. The high proportion of casualties suffered by the two armour regiments, were because the enemy was not neutralised. Indian troops in the bridgehead were highly vulnerable to artillery fire as they did not have cover of prepared defences which made them ideal target for artillery fire.

OPERATIONS IN RAVI – BEAS CORRIDOR

This Corridor has political and strategic important objectives on both sides of the border like Lahore and Kasur in Pakistan and Amritsar, Ferozepur and Fazilka in India. Capturing of these objectives opens the way to strategic heart land of both the countries. Therefore, this corridor has always attracted attention from both sides. 1965 War saw major offensives by India and Pakistan in this area. However, in 1971 War, this corridor

remained comparatively less active with no major offensives except some tactical actions by both the sides primarily to improve their defensive posture.

Indian 11 Corps was responsible for the defence of this sector. 11 Corps under Lt Gen N.C. Rawlley had three infantry divisions, a sector headquarters and an independent infantry brigade. 15 Infantry division with four brigades was responsible to defend area between Gurdaspur and the Grand Trunk (GT) road opposite Amritsar. 7 Infantry Division was responsible to defend area from the GT road to Ferozepur. 14 Infantry Division less a brigade was defending area between Ferozepur and Fazilka. 67 Infantry Brigade was responsible for Fazilka and 51 Independent Para Brigade for the defence of Ganganagar. In addition, 163 Infantry Brigade was moved from Ladakh and made responsible for the defence of Suratgarh area. Foxtrot Sector was responsible for the Fazilka – Ganganagar Sector.[357] 14 Independent Armoured Brigade was under command of the Corps, with two regiments in area Fatehgarh Churian and one located in area Kotkapura. 1 Armoured Division, the army reserve was located at Kotkapura. Headquarters 11 Corps was located at Amritsar, but due to large area of responsibility, an advance headquarters was established at Kotkapura[358].

Pakistani 4 Corps commanded by Lt Gen Bahadur Sher was responsible for the defence of this Corridor. 4 Corps was essentially deployed for defence but had been assigned some battalion size objectives, 500 to 2000 yards inside Indian Territory. These objectives being tactical in nature had no strategic value.[359] The task assigned to 4 Corps was to defend area from RD 205 on BRBL (north of Ravi siphon) in the north to Fort Abbas in the south and carry out tactical offensives to improve defensive posture. 4 Corps comprised 10 Division, 11 Division, 212 Brigade and 105 Brigade.

10 Division was responsible for the defence of Lahore from RD 205 on BRBL to Chattanwala in the south. It was also tasked

to improve defensive posture by undertaking a few tactical offensives. The division consisted of four brigades, namely 22 Brigade, 88 Brigade, 103 Brigade and 114 Brigade. 23 Cavalry was the armour regiment and 28 Punjab the Reconnaissance and Support battalion. The division's main line of defence was along Wagha Drain, whereas in Maqboolpur sector it was along River Ravi. For tactical offensives, 22 Brigade was tasked to capture area up to Sakki Nullah with a view to threaten Ajnala, 88 Brigade was tasked to capture Dhussi Bund, 103 Brigade had to capture area up to line of UBDC and 114 Brigade was to capture Rani, Mulakot and Pulkanjri villages.

11 Division was tasked to defend Kasur at all cost, denying line BRBL – Dipalpur canal. It was also tasked to improve defensive posture by undertaking a few tactical offensives. The Division comprised 21 Brigade, 52 Brigade and 106 Brigade. 4 Cavalry was the armour regiment with the Division. 212 Independent Infantry Brigade and 105 Brigade were tasked to defend Kanganpur and Sulemanki sectors respectively.

88 Brigade was given an independent sector to defend from RD 205 on BRBL in the north to Ravi Siphon in the south. 88 Brigade was from 17 Division and was placed under command 10 Division on 23 September 1971. Apart from defence, the brigade was also tasked to capture Bhago- Kamo enclave. On 23 November at 6 pm orders for limited offensive were received. Brigade planned its offensive in three phases. In Phase 1, Dhussi Bund from BP 85 to Bhago Kamo was to be captured by 5 Bengal Regiment. Phase 2 involved elimination of enclaves at Toti post and Akbarpur post. And in Phase 3, 17 Punjab had to capture Goga post, Bhalol post and Chhannan Mallah. The attack went in as planned and by morning of 4 December, Dhussi Bund was captured. In order to consolidate, Pakistani troops exploited up to river line by midday. Thus, by the end of 4 December, approximately 8 square miles of Indian Territory had been captured.[360] On 6 December, C company of 43 Baloch holding

Vera and Burj posts was shelled and Indian tanks started working around its flanks. The attack was repulsed with artillery fire. On 12 December, Indians re-captured Fatehpur post, and subsequently the whole of enclave.

114 Brigade was tasked to defend area between south Siphon to Chinkowindi. Its offensive task was to capture villages Malakot, Pulkanjri and Rani. Pulkanjri was an Indian village of 30 to 40 houses. It was being defended by an Indian army platoon. It had an outpost normally manned by a platoon of BSF. This post was 500 yards away from the village. Malakot was another Indian village near the border. It had 30 to 40 houses. An army platoon was defending it and there was a BSF post along the border. 114 Brigade planned to capture Pulkanjri with a company of 43 Punjab, village Rani with troops from 20 Baloch and Malakot by troops from 18 FF. A company of 43 Punjab under Maj Suba Sadiq attacked Pulkanjri at 8:15 pm on 3 December. 43 Punjab was delayed in crossing the start line. The guns were not informed about the delay and the fire plan went off as scheduled. During the clearance of the objective, Maj Suba Sadiq was killed. The company lost cohesion and withdrew. The objective was kept under artillery fire throughout the night. The continuous fire helped in the second attack. CO 43 Punjab took control of A Company in the early hours of 4 December and launched second attack to capture Pulkanjri. The objective was captured by 1 am 4 December.[361]

At 11:30 pm on 3 December, 20 Baloch attacked village Rani. The attack stalled about 800 yards short of the village. It was captured by mid-day. The attack on Malakot by 18 FF set off at 11:45 pm on 3 December and it was captured soon.[362]

From 4 to 16 December, Indians tried thrice to re-capture Pulkanjri but attacks were beaten back. Finally, at 6:45 pm on 17 December, after the declaration of cease fire, enemy attacked the village and captured it by 9 pm.[363] Two companies of 15 Punjab from 22 Brigade were tasked to recapture Pulkanjari. The attack

was launched at 5:25 am on 18 December without artillery fire due to imposition of ceasefire. The troops had to pay a heavy price for lack of artillery fire. The assaulting troops were pinned down by heavy enemy fire. All requests for artillery fire were denied. Lance Naik Mahfooz of 15 Punjab destroyed an Indian machine gun with hand grenades. He was killed in the action and was awarded the highest gallantry award for bravery i.e., Nishan-e-Haider. By 12:45 pm, the attacking troops were withdrawn.[364]

103 Brigade was tasked to defend Burki sector, from Chirkowinchi in the north along Wagah drain to Chattanwala east of BRBL in the south. 103 Brigade was also tasked to capture area up to home bank of Upper Bari Doab Canal (UBDC). 103 Brigade tasked 16 Punjab to capture Kalsian and Khalra bridges. 3 Baloch was tasked to capture Cheena Bidi Chand, village Theh Kuala and village Gilpan. 2 Baloch was tasked to capture Area Bridge and Baba Pir post. H-hour was 6 pm.

16 Punjab tasked A Company to capture area 5 r and RD 225 in phase 1 and in next phase capture Kharla Bridge. D Company was tasked to capture Kalsian and exploit up to Zairat Baba Pir. By first light on 4 December, the battalion had secured its assigned objectives except Khalra Bridge. On night 4-5 December the enemy blew up the bridge and withdrew east wards.[365]

A company 3 Baloch was tasked to capture Theh Khulla. Due to heavy artillery fire, Indians vacated the position before A Company arrived at the scene. The company commander took advantage of the situation and moved forward to Giplan. Giplan was captured without opposition. Thereafter, A Company advanced to UBDC and consolidated on home bank.[366] D Company of 2 Baloch was tasked to capture Baba Pir post. The village was captured without opposition. By 9 am on 4 December, D Company had secured far bank of UBDC.

On night 7-8 December, the Indians recaptured Cheena Bidi Chand. Two companies of 2 Baloch and C squadron of 23 Cavalry counter-attacked at 5 am on 8 December. At 5 am eight Sherman

tanks of 23 Cavalry moved forward of Hudiara drain through Butcher Khana distributary up to village Marja. The leading tanks entered the village at above 6 am without meeting opposition. In a mud house the troop commander surprised fifteen Indian soldiers at their breakfast. The JCO admitted that they mistook the noise of tanks for their own squadron. Sometime later the battalion joined up and started consolidating. At about 6:30 am Indian aircraft attacked the position. One tank was hit by a rocket. At 7 am the squadron commander left three tanks with infantry and withdrew the remainder four to Hudiara drain.[367] After last light, all the seven tanks were back in rear position.

22 Brigade was the reserve brigade of 10 Division. It was centrally located with 43 Baloch along Wagah axis. On 15 December, a plan was made to employ 22 Brigade and 23 Cavalry from the area of 88 Brigade. Attack was to be launched at 8 pm 17 December. However due to announcement of ceasefire on 17 December, the attack was called off.[368]

In 11 Division, apart from defence of the area, only one worthwhile offensive operation i.e., capture of Hussaniwala enclave by 106 Brigade was under-taken. While the division captured Hussaniwala enclave, it lost Sehjra enclave to Indians.

52 Brigade under took some minor tactical operations to improve its defensive posture. 22 Punjab occupied Indian bund north of Khemkaran and Shahpur Nan. The unit also occupied Harbachan Singh and Kols villages. Area east of Katlohi BOP was captured by 8 FF.

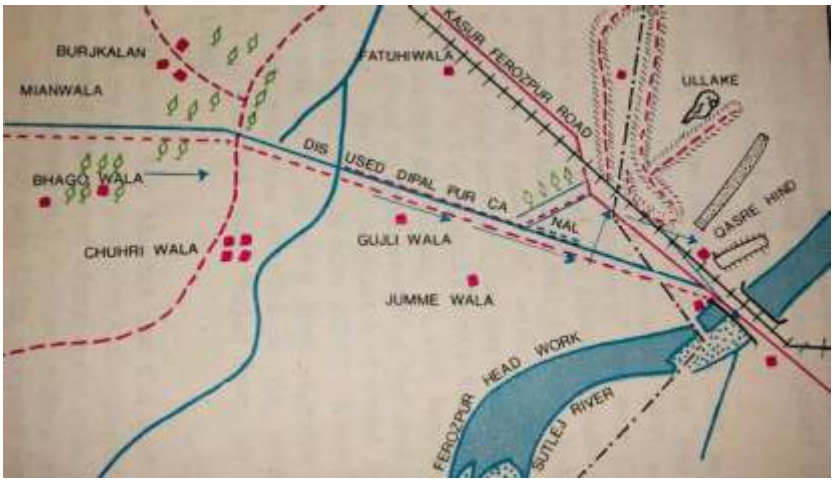
Sehjra enclave was being defended by R Force consisting of a regular company, two mujahid companies and a Ranger company. On night 5-6 December, Indian 48 Brigade attacked Sehjra and occupied it.[369] 106 Brigade was tasked to capture Hussainiwala enclave. The brigade planned its attack in two phases. In phase 1, 41 Baloch less a company was tasked to capture Qaisr e Hind with B Company, northern bank of Dipalpur canal by A Company and Shainke post by D Company. B Company of 3 Punjab was tasked

to capture perimeter up to the head works. D Company of 19 Punjab was tasked to capture Railway Bund. In Phase 2, 19 Punjab less a company was tasked to capture Guide Bund, Abutment Bund and Hockey Spur. Two troops of B squadron of 4 Cavalry were tasked to reinforce the captured area at first light 4 December.[370]

Brig Mumtaz (commander 106 Brigade) delivered his orders at 4 pm on 3 December. At 6:30 pm, A and B companies of 41 Baloch, B Company of 3 Punjab and D Company of 19 Punjab crossed the start line and headed for their objectives. The objective of B Company of 3 Punjab was about 1400 yards away. Only the dark silhouettes of trees were visible against the sky. Capt. Asif the company commander was soon martyred. Thereafter the company was led by Capt. Aftab Aziz. As they neared the head works, Indians counter attacked; inflicting severe casualties on the company. Lt Col Ghulam Hussain, the CO of 3 Punjab, led some men to help B company. He was killed by a burst of machine gun. Resultantly B Company of 3 Punjab's situation became precarious.[371]

In first phase, two companies of 41 Baloch crossed start line at 6:30 pm. Within a few minutes, the companies lost touch with the Commanding Officer, Lt Col Habib Ahmed. B Company under Maj Zahid Yasin went for Qaisr e Hind. A Company under Maj Hanif went for northern bank of Dipalpur canal. Qaisr e Hind and area around it was being defended by troops of Indian 15 Punjab. Commanding Officer of Indian 15 Punjab was outside the enclave at the time of attack. Due to heavy fire, he could not enter the enclave and take command of his troops. India had no tanks in the enclave and due to damage to the bridge could not reinforce the enclave.[372]

A Company commander of 41 Baloch was killed about 400 yards from the start line. Thereafter the company was led by Lt Habib. The company captured its objective by 8 pm.



Map 27.

Source: Maj Gen Shaukat Riza, Izzat-o-Iqbal. Published by School of Artillery, Nowshera, Pakistan.

B Company advanced towards Qaisr-e-Hind with Kasur-Ferozepur road on its right. The company attacked Qaisr e Hind from the rear. It was a hard-fought battle. The Indians held out till first light when all resistance ceased in the area. By first light, a troop of Pakistani tanks moved forward and dealt with an Indian observer who had continued in his post even after the capture of Qaisr-e-Hind.[373] D Company 41 Baloch captured Shainke post.[374] The fourth company employed in phase 1 of the attack was D Company (Capt. Obaid Ullah) of 19 Punjab with embankment east of railway line as its objective. The company captured its objective without much difficulty.[375]

Situation at 9:30 pm on 3 December was that the attack of three companies was progressing well while B Company of 3 Punjab was in a lot of difficulties. At this time, Brig Mumtaz, Commander 106 Brigade drove forward to the customs post. Brig Mumtaz ordered 41 Baloch to assist B Company 3 Punjab. By first light 4 December, the objective was captured.[376]

In phase 2, three companies (A, B and C) of 19 Punjab were employed. D Company after capturing railway embankment in phase 1 moved forward and occupied Ullake Embankment without much resistance. Soon afterwards, B Company captured Ullake post. A company 19 Punjab captured an embankment running north from Qaisr e Hind. At 2 pm 4 December, C Company captured 'Hockey spur'. [377]

212 Infantry Brigade was responsible for the defence of Kanganpur sector. The brigade had three infantry battalions (50 Baloch, 30 AK and 31 AK) and 173 Engineer Road Construction Battalion. The Engineers battalion had been moved from Karakorum highway.173 Engineers battalion volunteered to capture a couple of Indian posts. Capt. Hamid led the assault. The company lost seven killed and six wounded but successfully overran the post in a spirited rush. Capt. Hamid was awarded Sitara-i-Jurat.

105 Infantry Brigade was responsible for the defence of Sulemanki Sector. In addition, it was also tasked to capture Pakka Enclave to remove threat to the head works and straighten own defences. 105 Brigade comprised 2 Independent armoured squadron (Sherman tanks), 7 Punjab, 18 Baloch, 6 FF, 33 Pakpattan Mujahid Battalion, 20 Sind Desert Rangers and 92 Independent Field Company Engineers.[378]

On the Indian side, the area was being defended by 67 Infantry Brigade. The main defences of the brigade were on Sabuna distributary, (mentioned as canal in Pakistani accounts of the battle) well ahead of Fazilka. 3 Assam was responsible for the defence of Sabuna distributary. It had a company each at Pakka, Right guide bund and Bridge guarding Amroha approach. Depth Company was on Sabuna distributary.[379]

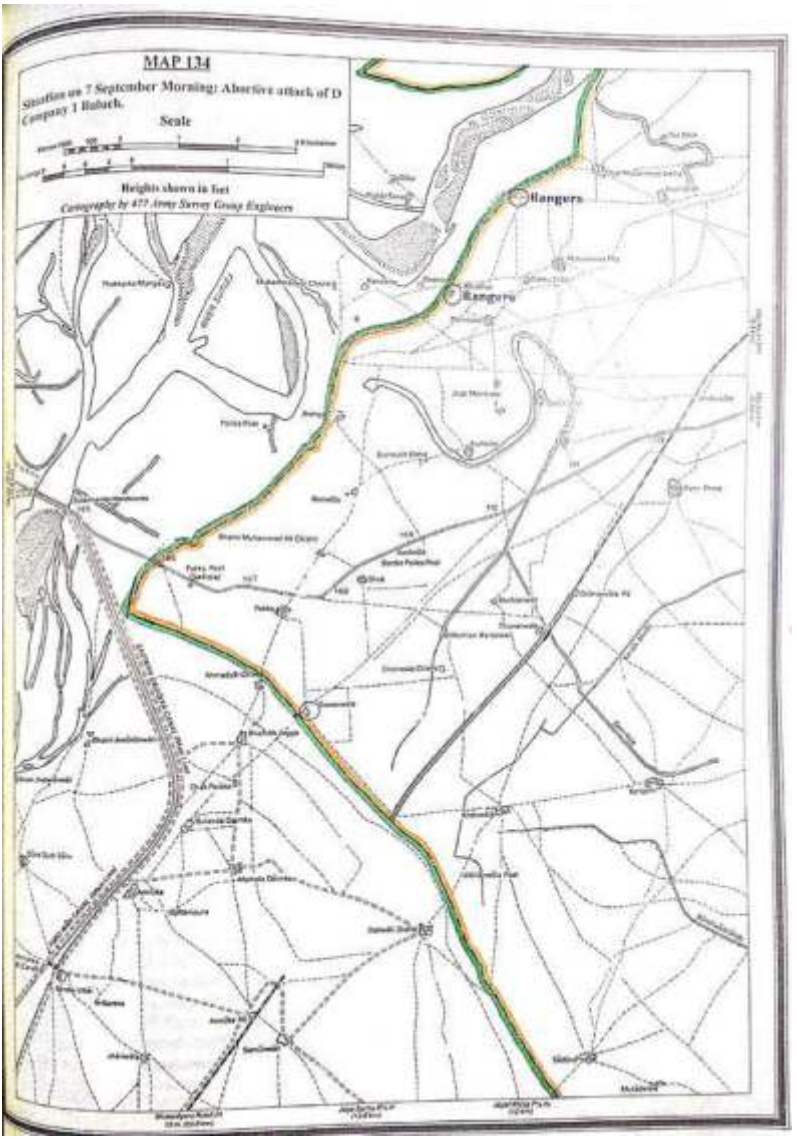
105 Brigade planned its offensive in three phases. In phase1, Mujahids and Rangers had to capture Indian border out posts. D Company of 6 FF with a troop of tanks was tasked to capture Mambake and Jhok Membake. B Company of 6 FF was tasked to

capture Gurmukh Khera Bridge and establish itself along Sabuna embankment. A and C companies of 6 FF were tasked to capture road bend behind Sadiqia post. In Phase 2, 7 Punjab with a troop of tanks was tasked to capture Dhok securing approach Fazilka-Sulemanki, as close to the main bridge on Sabuna as possible. In Phase 3, 18 Baloch with armour squadron less two troops was tasked to clear Khanwala complex from the right and rear.[380]

At 6 pm Pakistan artillery opened up to support phase1 of the attack. The Rangers and Mujahids captured their objectives with little resistance. D Company 6 FF with a troop of tanks captured Mambake and Jhok Mambake. B company 6 FF (Maj Shabbir Sharif) captured Gurmukhera Bridge and embankment on far side of Sabuna canal. An immediate counter attack was launched by Indians with a company of 4 Jats and a squadron of 18 Cavalry. The tanks bogged down and the attack failed. There was much confusion at HQ 67 Indian Brigade and it was suggested to withdraw the troops to inner defences of Fazilka. The Indian Army Commander overruled and ordered that Sabuna drain defences be held at all cost.[381]

As part of phase 1 of the operation, C and D companies (6 FF) knocked out Sadiqia post and captured 30 POWs. During the night 4-5 December, B Company of 6 FF was reinforced by C Company. With the assistance of C Company, lodgement across Sabuna canal was expanded to 1100 yards. On the same night i.e., 4-5 December, 4 Jat once again attacked the Pakistani position but was repulsed. Nine Indian tanks were destroyed.[382] On 6 December, Indians attacked B Company 6 FF with full force. The company was subjected to prolonged artillery fire under whose cover Indian tanks approached within 800 yards of Pakistani positions.

The company commander, Maj Shabbir Sharif moved from platoon to platoon, despite heavy enemy fire. He lost his life by a tank shell while personally engaging it with a recoilless rifle. Maj Shabbir Sharif, who was a sword of honour from PMA and Sitara-e-Jurat in 1965 war, was awarded Nishan-i-Haider.[383]



Map 28.

Source: Lt Gen Mahmud Ahmed, History of Indo-Pak War -1965, Karachi: Services Book Club, 2006.

In phase 2 of the attack, 7 Punjab, with a troop of tanks, advanced towards Dhok at 7:30 pm on 3 December. At about 500 yards short of their objective, they were fired upon by Indian tanks. Indian tanks turned back when medium artillery fire was brought on them, and the infantry was able to resume advance. By 11:30 pm, Dhok had been captured. Pakka complex was cleared by 3 am on 4 December.[384]

In phase 3, 18 Baloch had to capture Khanwala complex. C Company was tasked to lead the attack. By first light 4 December, Khanwala complex was found abandoned by Indian troops. Therefore CO 18 Baloch decided to send a reconnaissance patrol to Sabuna canal. On confirmation that the area was vacant, the Balochis crossed over Sabuna canal and consolidated.[385]

Last major counter attack on Sabuna defences was launched by 15 Rajput on night 8-9 December but could not succeed. 15 Rajput however managed to capture Ghazi post on night 13-14 December.[386] Brigadier Hamza, Commander 105 Brigade ordered 46 Punjab (From 7 Division) to recapture the post. Ghazi post was recaptured by two companies of 46 Punjab at 2 pm on 14 December.[387]

OPERATIONS IN SINDH SECTOR

The area bordering Sindh province with India is generally desert with very limited means of communications. The area of operations encompasses Cholistan and Thar deserts. Rann of Kutch is at the extreme south of Thar desert.

Pakistani 18 Division was responsible for the defence of Sindh and some portion of southern Punjab's border with India. The Division was commanded by Maj Gen B.M. Mustafa. 18 Division had three infantry brigades (51, 55 and 206). 51 Brigade under Brig Tariq Mir consisted of 10 Punjab and 38 Baloch. 55 Brigade under Brig Anwar ul Haq consisted of 21 FF, 39 FF and 26 Baloch. 206 Brigade under Brig Jahanzeb Arbab consisted of 1 Punjab, 41 Punjab and 20 FF. 22 Cavalry (T-55) and 38 Cavalry (Shermans) were the two armour regiments available to the Division. Division

Artillery consisted of 7 Field Regiment, 40 Field Regiment, 79 Field Regiment and 65 Medium Regiment. 28 Baloch was the R&S battalion under Division HQ.

GOC 18 Division planned to execute his defensive tasks by placing the main defensive effort in the northern (Reti - Rahimyar) sector and secondary effort in the central and southern (Chhor and Badin) sectors. Apart from defending the area of responsibility, there were other tasks of 18 Division as well. These were to guard Sukkur bridges, to organise surveillance along the border to determine enemy's main thrust, to contain Indian offensive and create opportunity for the divisional reserves to undertake offensive into Indian Territory to destroy/secure the base of Indian offensive. The division also had to be prepared to undertake a pre-emptive operation to disrupt/disorganise Indian army while she was in the process of assembling her forces in the Ramgarh salient.[388]

51 Brigade with 22 Cavalry under command, was division reserve south, located in general area Dehrki/Reti. It was tasked to be prepared to destroy enemy penetration in brigade area from including Rajarwala to excluding Jamrao. It was to be prepared to counter attack and destroy enemy armour and infantry concentration in the area of Khinju, Sandh and Gath. It was also tasked to be prepared for counter offensive in the south.[389]

206 Brigade with 38 Cavalry less a squadron, four Mujahid battalions and one wing of Rangers was to organize main defence from area including Jarewala to including Gabbar. For offensive tasks, 206 Brigade was to be relieved of the defensive task by Zulu infantry brigade and regrouped as division reserve north located at Manthar. It had to be prepared to counter attack enemy penetration across main defences. It also had to be prepared to attack enemy concentration in area Jarewala - Kandera and Bhagla. It was to be prepared for counter offensive in Ramgarh salient on orders along axis Bhagla-Islamgarh-Bhutewala or Jarewala-Kishangarh- Tanot.[390]

55 Infantry Brigade was responsible for the defence of Chhor and Badin approaches. It was 18 Division's secondary defensive effort. An X Ray Force, comprising company R&S and a wing of Rangers was responsible for Derawar – Islam Garh; primarily for early warning of any Indian operation in the area. Hur Forces were responsible for area Jamrao by keeping Nara canal- Jamroa secured against sabotage.[391]

All planning and training of 18 Division was for defensive operations. It was in November that the task to undertake an offensive in Reti Rahim Yar Khan sector aimed at capturing Jaisalmir was assigned to 18 Division by GHQ. Till then no preparation had been carried out nor the troops were trained for deep offensive task. GHQ had been warned by Assistant Chief of Air Staff (Operations) in August that if 18 Division was committed to offensive operations, Air HQ should be given notice so that Jacobabad air strip could be activated. On 30 November, a senior staff officer of 18 Division had met CGS and shown him a list of equipment that had been promised but not delivered. On 3 December, neither the Air Force had been told nor the deficient equipment delivered.[392]

18 Division planned to employ 51 and 206 Brigades for the newly assigned offensive task to capture Jaisalmir. 51 Brigade with 22 Cavalry had to capture Ramgarh and Jaisalmir while masking Longanewala. 206 Brigade with a squadron of 38 Cavalry was tasked to capture Longanewala. This involved a move of 61 miles, 40 of which were over uncertain dirt tracks and 20 miles over soft sands, during eight hours of darkness. Leading elements of 51 Brigade had to cross international border by 9 pm on 3 December. This was later changed to 2 am on 4 December.[393]

For the sake of secrecy, no movement was allowed before last light on 3 December. For the same reason the administrative echelons of the Division were also kept out of planning loop. Commanding Officer of Division Medical battalion came to know about the offensive once it had already started.[394]

Indian Southern Command was responsible for the defense of the area of Rajasthan and Gujrat, with the exception of Ganganagar sector of Rajasthan which was the responsibility of Western Command. Southern Command was commanded by Lt Gen G.G. Bewoor, and his advance HQ was set up at Jodhpur. The Command had two Infantry Divisions, 11 and 12 for operations in the area. 10 Para Commando battalion was also allocated to the Command. In addition, Kilo sector was responsible for the defense of Bikaner sector and Kutch sector was responsible for the defense of Kutch area. These sectors mainly had para-military forces, although 13 Grenadiers, a camel battalion was allocated to Kilo sector.[395]

Southern Command planned to initially deploy a brigade each in the Jaisalmer and Barmer sectors, to cover the concentration of the remainder of 11 and 12 Infantry Divisions from cantonments in the rear. Subsequently, the divisions were to concentrate and be prepared to launch offensive operations into Pakistan territory. Accordingly, one infantry brigade of 12 Division was deployed in area Kishangarh-Tanot-Sadehwala. One infantry brigade of 11 Infantry Division was deployed in the area Munabao- Gadra road.[396]

With regard to offensive operations, 12 Infantry Division was to advance on axis Kishangarh -Sakhirewalakhu -Bhabeya - Rahim Yar Khan. 11 Infantry Division was to advance on axis Khokhrapar/Gadra -Naya Chor. 10 Para Commando was to raid Chachro and Badin. Kilo and Kutch sectors were to carry out some local offensives, eliminate a few Pakistani border out posts and improve their defensive posture. The firm bases were occupied by 26 October 1971 and preparations completed by 3 December.[397]

On 2 December, Pakistani Directorate of Military Operations laid down night 3-4 December to be the D-Day for crossing the international border by 18 Division to capture Jaisalmer. GHQ laid the limitation that there would be no move before last light on 3 December.



Map 29.

Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

On night 3-4 December, limitation of no move before last light on 3 December made it difficult for the advancing troops to adhere to the laid down timings. The infantry had been mounted on agricultural tractors, to keep up with the armour. The wheeled tractors sank in soft sand making movement difficult. Artillery was also having problems in towing the guns to their deployment areas. The GOC spoke to VCGS (Maj Gen Anwar Qureshi) and requested for postponement of H-hour. GHQ agreed to postponement as long as the H-hour remained within the limits of night 3-4 December. Gen Mustafa arrived in Gabbar at 10 pm on 3 December. Checking on the progress of move it became clear to Gen Mustafa that there was little likelihood of making the deadline of night 3-4 December.[398] He therefore postponed the operation for 24 hours.[399]

Night of 3-4 December and the day of 4 December was used by 51 Brigade, 206 Brigade and artillery 18 Division to move near

the border so as to commence operation on night 4-5 December.

The area of 18 Division offensive was out of reach of PAF from Karachi and Sargodha, whereas the IAF had at least three air bases around Jaisalmir. PAF due to lack of information about the 18 Division offensive had not operationalised Jacobabad air base.[400]

Oblivious of impending operation by Pakistani 18 Division, 12 Indian Division's operation started on the evening of 4 December. The leading formation captured Sakhirewalakot and Islamkot on the night of 4-5 December. One company of Indian 23 Punjab (12 Division) was deployed at Longanawala. This company was to play an important role in retarding the offensive of 18 Pakistani Division.[401]

51 Brigade (18 Division) had ordered 22 Cavalry and 38 Baloch to capture Ramgarh and Jaisalmer. 22 Cavalry reached Masit Wari Bhit at 11:30 pm on 4 December. Here the regiment replenished. 22 Cavalry had 42 tanks organized in 4 squadrons of 10 tanks each. The regiment carried one company of 38 Baloch on tanks. 10 Punjab was ferried in trailers towed by agricultural tractors. During the move from Gabbar to Masit Wari Bhit, tanks had to haul out some guns also which were bogged in the soft sand.

22 Cavalry crossed the international border at 1 am on 5 December. The leading tanks hit the road Longanewala—Ghotran at 3:30 am. In the absence of Commander 51 Brigade, CO 22 Cavalry and CO 38 Baloch modified the plan and decided to reduce Longanewala before going for Ramgarh. According to original plan they had to just mask Longanewala, to be captured later by 206 Brigade. They knew that 206 Brigade was delayed and wanted to remove the threat to their rear.[402] Little did they know that Longanewala was held by an isolated company of Indian 23 Punjab? This company being isolated was itself in a precarious situation.[403]

206 Brigade had tasked 1 Punjab to secure Track junction and

20 FF with squadron of 38 Cavalry to capture Longanewala. 206 Brigade was late in reaching concentration area. The troops moved off at 1 am on 5 December. Soon the communications with advancing troops broke down. Several vehicles sank to their axles in the sand. 20 FF could not keep up with the squadron of 38 Cavalry. Just before crossing international border a platoon of 20 FF joined the armour squadron. Only six tanks of squadron of 38 Cavalry and a platoon of 1 Punjab crossed the zero line at 5:30 am hours on 5 December following the same track as 51 Brigade. The squadron commander could neither communicate with his CO nor with his tank crew due to old vintage tanks and equipment.[404] The tanks were unable to travel any further. They were asked to establish a firm base at Kharotar.

Alpha squadron of 22 Cavalry contacted Longanewala at 4:45 am on 5 December. "Once informed of Pakistani offensive, GOC of Indian 12 Division called for immediate air strikes by the Indian Air Force."[405] He also put offensive of his Division on the hold after capturing Islamkot and took defensive measures to meet Pakistani offensive.

At 7:10 am on 5 December, B squadron of 22 Cavalry and a company of 38 Baloch formed up for attack. Enemy opened up with 3 to 4 anti-tank guns and 4 to 5 machine guns. While the assault was half way, at about 7:20 am, four Indian air crafts (Hunters from Jaisalmer air base) attacked and destroyed 5 tanks. When CO 22 Cavalry lined up the tanks for the second time at 7:50 am, Indian air craft attacked again and destroyed 6 more tanks. At 8:30 am Gen Mustafa landed in his helicopter in the midst of tanks. He went round the troops and then flew off. At 9:30 am the tanks readied for the third time. At this stage Brig Tariq Mir called off the attack. D squadron of 22 Cavalry broke contact at 3 pm on 5 December 71. At 3:30 pm, unit came under last air attack of the day and lost another 4 tanks. By late evening, 22 Cavalry had lost 17 tanks and several other vehicles. "A total of 11 air strike missions were flown by the IAF from first flight onwards and heavy casualties inflicted on Pakistani armour,

vehicles and troops."[406] By late evening on 5 December, 51 Brigade group withdrew north of Longanewala.

The only anti-aircraft support i.e., 311 Independent light anti-aircraft battery was ordered on 3 December to join the divisional artillery. It had to join 65 Medium Regiment at Masit Wari Bhit. The move from Gabbar to Masit Wari proved too much for the vintage gun-towing vehicles. 65 Medium Regiment had to help out; even then only three out of four 40 mm guns made to the destination.[407]

By night fall on 5 December, both the brigades concentrated about 3 to 4 miles north of Longanewala. Commander 206 Brigade suggested to Commander 51 Brigade that resources of both the Brigades be pooled up to attack Longanewala. Commander 51 Brigade agreed and time for attack was fixed at 3 am on 6 December. At around 10 pm on 5 December, 51 Brigade along with 22 Cavalry started withdrawing to Pakistani territory. Commander 51 Brigade informed Commander 206 Brigade that since 22 Cavalry had received orders to withdraw by the Division HQs, his troops could not stay in the area.[408] Commander 206 Brigade called off the attack and took over the command of 51 Brigade as well, with the consent of its brigade commander. On 6 December, GHQ ordered withdrawal of troops to their original defensive positions to be carried out on night 7-8 December. Due to large number of vehicles stuck in Indian territory, both the brigade commanders were against withdrawal on night 7-8 December. Gen Mustafa accede to their request. On 8 December, Maj Gen Abdul Hamid took over command of 18 Division.[409] By 8 am on 10 December, both the brigades had withdrawn to Gabbar where they settled down for defence.

As a result of 18 Division offensive, the Indian Army gave up their offensive in this sector by their 12 Division and instead went on the defensive. Once it was realised that Pakistan had withdrawn from the area, one infantry brigade from 12 Division was sent to 11 Division in the Chhor sector to reinforce their offensive.[410]

55 Brigade (18 Pakistani Division) with a squadron of 38 Cavalry, Company R&S, four Mujahid battalions (44, 46 and 49. Fourth unit not known) and a wing of Rangers was made responsible for the defence of central and southern sectors (Chhor and Badin). 55 Brigade under Brig Anwar ul Haq consisted of 21 FF (Lt Col Jehan Dad), 39 FF (Lt Col Ijaz Ahmed) and 26 Baloch (Lt Col Sher Afzal). The brigade had to defend axes Chhor – Umarkot and Rahim Ki Bazar- Badin against any Indian offensive developing towards Mirpur, Hyderabad, and Sajawal. Main defences were along the green belt. Para military forces were tasked to delay, disrupt and disorganize enemy advance from the border to the main defences.[411]

One infantry battalion was deployed in general area Badin to defend the southern approach. Two infantry battalions were holding main defences in Naya Chhor. 44 Mujahid battalion was at Umarkot. 55 Brigade had planned to trade bulk of desert space to disrupt, cause attrition and delay Indian offensive. Main battle and hence main defences were along the green belt beyond which no penetration was to be allowed.

11 Indian Division started its operations at last light on 4 December in Chhor sector. Main offensive effort of 11 Division less a brigade was along axis Munabao - Khokhropar- Naya Chhor. Secondary effort with one infantry brigade was along axis Gadra- Chachro- Umarkot. It advanced from three separate directions and captured Ratok, Relnor and Mankor from the north, Kajlor, Vitala and Khokhropar from the centre, and Gadra and Khinsar from the south by the evening of 5 December. There being no proper road, construction of a duck board track from Munabao to Khokhropar and beyond towards Naya Chhor commenced immediately by Indians. Concurrently, they started restoring railway track which was destroyed in places. The advance of 11 Division continued on 6 and 7 December slowly pushing the Pakistani covering troops back.[412]



Map 30.
Source: Google Maps with additional information by the author.

The screen position opposite Naya Chhor was pushed back on night 10-11 December and Purbat Ali was contacted. This position was strongly held and an outflanking move by armour was checked. Beyond this lay the Naya Chhor defenses held by 55 brigade less a battalion. Concurrent with the operations on the main axis, one brigade of 11 Division advanced in the south and captured Khinsar, Chachro and Bagal by 10 December. Due to emerging threat by secondary effort of Indian 11 Division to Umarkot, two 25 pounder guns were moved on 11 December from Naya Chhor to Umarkot. On 11 December, Indian 11 Division contacted the main defences of 55 Pakistani Brigade. To cater for this threat, GHQ ordered 33 Infantry Division with one infantry brigade (60 Brigade) to move to Thar sector, take 55 Brigade under command and assume responsibility for the defence of the area.

On night 12-13 December, the leading infantry brigade of 11 Indian Division attacked Purbat Ali and captured it by first light 13 December, opening the route to main defences at Naya Chhor. 11 Indian Division made contact with the Naya Chhor defences by 15 December. Probing attacks were immediatly launched.[413] After meeting stiff resistance on the main axis at Naya Chhor, one infantry battalion of Indian secondary effort brigade was ordered to advance on axis Chachro-Umarkot, to threaten the Naya Chhor defences from the south. The battalion captured Hingo Thar, about 7 km east of Umarkot on 16 December but fell back on being successfully counter-attacked by a company of 26 Baloch, on 17 December.[414]

After the arrival of 60 Brigade and Artillery 33 Division, 11 Indian Division could not advance any further till ceasefire was declared on 17 December.

One Indian infantry brigade which was moved to Chhor sector from 12 Infantry Division, could not be employed due to logistic problems and limitations of time.[415]

In the Sindh sector, two major battles were fought. First was 18 Division's offensive to capture Jaisalmer and second 55 Brigade and later 33 Division's defence of Chhor and Umarkot. 18 Division's offensive had many flaws. The manoeuvre lacked compatible mobility to traverse the terrain. Fire was missing due to absence of PAF and out of range/ communications with artillery. Due to lack of air cover, IAF had a field day. There was no point in dispatching 33 Division which was part of strategic reserves to Chhor as soon as 55 Brigades main defences were contacted. A reinforced infantry brigade is supposed to defeat an infantry divisions attack on its main defences.

The conduct of 1971 War in the Western Theatre, exhibited inadequate and incoherent strategic thinking at GHQ level. There was no workable military strategy to operationalise the strategic doctrine of defence of East Pakistan lay in West Pakistan. It simply meant that any loss in East Pakistan had to be compensated by

equal or more gains in West Pakistan. Such gains were only possible through strategic offensives. Pakistani 2 Corps was tasked for such an offensive. To facilitate 2 Corps, 18 Division was tasked to launch offensive to capture Jaisalmer. Capture or even a serious threat to Jaisalmer would have pulled Indian strategic reserves which contained Indian First Armoured Division, southward, thus uncovering the objective zone of Pakistani 2 Corps. The other two auxiliary efforts launched by Pakistan i.e., in Poonch and Chhamb, did not have strategic capacity to exert any pull on Indian strategic reserves. The city of Poonch had only political and no strategic value. Similarly, manoeuvre from Chhamb to Akhnur keeps on getting restricted as it gets closer to its too obvious objective. This effort launched south of Chenab towards Jammu would have exerted pull on Indian 1 Corps offensive in the corridor and put a lot of caution on it. Thus, onus of success of Pakistani 2 Corps was on the success of 18 Division's offensive. If that be the case, GHQ should have made all efforts to ensure its success. There were sufficient troops available to ensure success of 18 Division's offensive. Forces from Ravi- Chenab Corridor could have been spared for balance in Chhor-Umarkot sector and to make 18 Division's offensive more potent. Timely warning to PAF could have provided much needed air cover.

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CHAPTER 4

BHUTTO YEARS AND AFGHAN WAR, 1972 - 1992

The defeat in 1971 War shocked the nation and the army. Seeing writing on the wall, Gen Yahya handed over power to Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto, the leader of the majority party after 1971 elections, in the left-over Pakistan. Bhutto at that time was in USA representing Pakistan in UNO. He met the US President Mr. Nixon on 18 December 71 before coming back to Pakistan and told him that Pakistan was in the debt of United States during the recent trying days and that he now wanted good relations.[1] Bhutto called on Gen Yahya in Rawalpindi on 20 December as deputy prime minister and foreign minister. He left the house as the President of Pakistan.[2] The same day Lt Gen Gul Hassan was appointed the new Commander in Chief of the army.[3] Bhutto launched efforts to bring the nation to grips with the new reality, rebuild morale and confidence, re-orient failed policies both at home and abroad, and rehabilitate Pakistan in the world community.[4] He visited China in January 72 and then took a whirlwind tour of Islamic countries of the Middle East and Africa. Later he also visited Britain, which was very unsympathetic. In March 72 he even went to Soviet Union. After extensive discussions with the world leaders, he concluded that Pakistan was not likely to get much help from these countries.[5] For over four months after the ceasefire on 17 December 1971, no foreign power offered to mediate a peace settlement nor India took the initiative to call for a bilateral meeting.[6]

Immediately after the ceasefire in the Eastern Theatre on 16 December 71, India started shifting forces to the Western Theatre. Shifting of troops significantly tilted force ratio in India's favour in the Western Theatre. The new Pakistani government and military leadership viewed Indian military build-up with suspicion

and concern. India had first orchestrated alienation of Bengali population as proved in Agartala conspiracy case, then helped create Mukti Bahaini and thwarted all Pakistani efforts to resolve East Pakistan issue peacefully through diplomacy. Thereafter India dismembered Pakistan through naked military aggression while the World just stood by. The World seemed to be unconcerned about sovereignty and integrity of Pakistan. Pakistan since its independence had its back with the wall. It was Indian army and not diplomacy which was the main tool employed by the Indian government to further its hegemonic designs against Pakistan. Indian army was used in 1947-48 to occupy almost half of Kashmir, Junagarh and Hyderabad Deccan. Indian army was used in 1965 to continuously escalate the situation from aggressive deployment in Rann of Kutch, crossing the Cease fire Line in Kashmir and then attacking Pakistan in an undeclared war across the international border. In 25 years from 1947 till 1972, Pakistan had been subjected to extreme hostility from India. The new civilian government of Pakistan in 1972 had no illusions about India. They could not trust an Indian government which had recently dismembered Pakistan. Therefore, in February 1972, the government of Pakistan ordered immediate raising of two corps headquarters and two infantry divisions to gain balance against the Indian army now menacingly assembled on its borders. 5, 10 Corps Headquarters and two infantry divisions (35 and 37) were therefore raised. The debacle of 18 Division in Longanewala offensive and at Chhor in 1971 war convinced GHQ for the need of a corps headquarters in order to control future battles in the areas of Sindh. Headquarters 5 Corps was therefore raised on 15 March 1972 initially at Sukkur and later shifted to Karachi. With 12, and 23 Divisions deployed in Kashmir, a need was also felt for a corps headquarters for effective coordination between these divisions. Headquarters 10 Corps was therefore raised on 15 March 1972 at Rawalpindi. 35 Division was raised for the defence of area south of river Sutlej and 37 Division was raised to give balance in central Punjab. It was Indian threat on its borders which had forced one of the strongest civilian political government in

Pakistan to increase its military strength. India should have realized that nations go to any length to protect their sovereignty. Further militarization of the Subcontinent was not good for the people of either of the countries.

On 3 March 1972, Gen Tikka Khan was appointed as the new Chief of Army Staff. The new raisings of corps HQs and infantry divisions in early 1972 stabilized the situation on the borders and helped the government to undertake negotiations with India with confidence and without fear of further military coercion and blackmail.

It was from 26 to 29 April 72 that India finally sent their Union Minister Mr. D.P. Dhar for preliminary talks preparatory to a peace conference. It helped pave the way for Shimla conference in June 72. However, the message in the preliminary talks was loud and clear. India wanted to dictate a settlement of the Kashmir question. Pakistan however wanted the peace conference to address issues generated by the war.[7] Shimla conference started on 28 June 1972. India tried to use the issue of release of prisoners of war to coerce Pakistan into unfavourable agreement. Pakistan refused to be black mailed. India was not ready to accept Pakistan's principled stand that the peace agreement should be based on the UN Security Council Resolution 307 of 21 December 1971 demanding withdrawal of all armed forces to their respective territories and to positions which fully respected the ceasefire line in Jammu and Kashmir.[8] India while agreeing to withdrawal of its forces to international borders, wanted the line resulting from ceasefire of 17 December 1971 to be respected by both sides as a Line of Peace. This Indian proposal amounted to eventually accepting ceasefire line as the international border. Faced with take it or leave it choice, Pakistan decided to leave it and informed the Indian side at about 3 pm on 2 July about its decision.[9] At 6 pm Mr. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto announced that the delegation would return to Pakistan the next morning. Two hours later, near-failure turned into success. Indra Gandhi, the Indian Prime Minister

agreed to most of Pakistani terms of peace agreement.[10] The agreement was signed past midnight 2 and 3 July 1972. It was a great success of Pakistani diplomacy. One of the reasons was that Pakistan Armed Forces had quickly regained balance and Indian leverage of military coercion had been reduced considerably, although "the Shimla agreement was negotiated under circumstances characterised by coercion and blackmail."[11]

Indian coercion at Shimla convinced Pakistani leadership that sovereignty of the country would remain under threat unless appropriate measures were taken to protect it. Therefore, they took the decision to continue raising new formation headquarters and units. Headquarters 19 Division was raised on 5 October, 1972.

"It took nearly two years for Delhi and Dacca to realise that retention of Pakistani prisoners was a lever of diminishing value. Indeed, they became a liability for India, as world opinion became critical of their illegal detention in violation of international humanitarian law. Finally, in September 1973, India agreed to release all prisoners of war."[12] In February 1974, during the Islamic summit conference at Lahore, Pakistan recognised Bangladesh to facilitate its prime minister, Sheikh Mujib Ur Rehman to attend the summit.[13]

Indian nuclear explosion on 18 May 1974 jolted Pakistan government and the military leadership. "To Pakistan's shock, few countries criticised India for the explosion. Washington's reaction to the Indian nuclear explosion was particularly muted."[14] Four years earlier, Indian aggression against Pakistan had been quietly accepted by the world as fait accompli and now her nuclear explosion was also accepted with least murmur. "Instead, the United States now focused its non-proliferation agenda on Pakistan."[15] "In Pakistan army, some officers were concerned about the way India was being run. Mrs. Gandhi had made belligerent statements about Pakistan and Kashmir and it was feared that, in order to restore her waning popularity, she might manufacture an incident from which conflict could erupt."[16]

Nuclearization of India had badly affected the strategic balance in the Subcontinent. To restore the balance, Pakistan had no choice but to acquire nuclear weapons. India had once again raised the level of threat. Now it was nuclear. The blame for nuclear weapons in the Subcontinent rests squarely on the shoulders of India. Pakistan realized that acquisition of nuclear technology was a lengthy process. Therefore, as a short-term measure it was decided to raise three infantry divisions from the prisoners returning from India. These were the same divisions which had valiantly fought in the erstwhile East Pakistan. 9 Division was raised at Kohat, 14 Division at Okara and 16 Division at Quetta, all during 1975.

With the raising of 9 Division at Kohat, a need arose for a corps headquarters at Peshawar to command 7 and 9 Divisions located in the Khyber Pakhtunkhawa (old NWFP) province. Headquarters 11 Corps was therefore raised in 1975.

"On 12 June 1975, Mrs. Gandhi was found guilty of election corruption by the courts. On the 26th she declared state of emergency and arrested thousands of political opponents. GHQ warned units along LOC and the border to be vigilant, and the PAF increased combat air patrol and surveillance."[17] Once bitten twice shy, the government of Pakistan was not taking any chances with India and Indra Gandhi. It illustrates the state of mistrust in Pakistani leadership about their big neighbour.

1976 started with Gen Tikka Khan retiring on 28 February. He was succeeded by Gen Zia ul Haq.[18] Same year, an agreement with US was signed for the supply of arms worth $ 38.6 million.[19] Compared to it, India received arms worth $ 1,273 million from Soviet Union during 1964-73.[20] It was also in 1976, that a Pakistani metallurgist, Dr A. Q. Khan was appointed by the government to build a uranium enrichment plant at Kahuta.[21] It was Pakistan's long-term response to Indian nuclear explosion in 1974. It was in the same year that the first steps towards Afghan tragedy of more than thirty years civil war were taken. Sardar Daoud had assumed power in Afghanistan on 17 July 1973 after

deposing King Zahir Shah. He tried to use Soviet Union to consolidate his power at home and pressurise Pakistan. By 1976, Daoud realised that the Soviets had an agenda of their own. They had penetrated into the internal political fabric of the country in order to strengthen the communist political forces in the country. To counterbalance the Soviet influence, Daoud embarked on efforts to improve relations with Pakistan, Iran and other Muslim countries. He and Prime Minister Bhutto exchanged visits in 1976.[22] The Soviets got alarmed and started preparations to counter Daoud's moves.

In Pakistan, national elections were held on 7 March 1977. Nine opposition parties had formed an alliance to contest against the ruling Pakistan People's Party. After the elections, the opposition started country wide demonstrations to protest against alleged rigging. By mid-June, more than 11,000 protesters were put in prisons by the government.[23] Protracted negotiations were held between the opposition parties and the government. They failed to reach any agreement. Meanwhile state authority was being eroded by daily protests and strikes in the country. On 4 July 77, Chief of the Army Staff, Gen Zia ul Haq imposed Martial Law and took over the country. In foreign relations, Zia continued Bhutto's endeavours to improve relations with Afghanistan. "Daoud's talks with Zia proved extremely useful.[24] "He asked President Zia 'to give me time to mould public opinion in my country to effect a change .... to normalise relations with Pakistan."[25] He however was too late. On 27 April 1978, Daoud was murdered and replaced with Nur Muhammad Tarakai who represented People's Democratic Party of Afghanistan (PDPA). Infighting in PDPA led to Tarakai's murder in September 1979. He was succeeded by Hafizullah Amin whose radical reforms evoked even stronger opposition from the Afghan people. Being headstrong, Soviets considered him to be endangering the stability of the communist revolution. On 26 December 1979, the Soviet forces rolled into Afghanistan, murdered Amin and replaced him with Babrak Karmal. The intervention provoked a deep sense of

alarm in Pakistan. The military strategists in Pakistan believed that after consolidating in Afghanistan, Soviet Union would move through Pakistan for access to the warm waters.[26] For Pakistan, the choice was either to wait for its turn to be occupied by the Soviets or help the Afghans who had already started a weak resistance movement against the Soviets. Pakistani leadership took the most logical decision i.e., to help and arm the resistance in Afghanistan. "Pakistan's decision to assist the jihad was made independently, without foreign instigation."[27] In 1980, US President Carter announced an offer of $400 million in economic and military assistance for Pakistan over 18 months. President Zia rejected the offer describing it as peanuts.[28] For more than a year, Pakistan continued to support the Afghan resistance out of its own meagre resources. Non acceptance of US aid had also reduced the risk of plunging Pakistan back into the orbit of the Cold War.[29] Due to the new Soviet threat on Pakistan's Western borders, Headquarters 12 Corps was raised at Quetta in March 1980.

Pakistan's foreign and domestic policies in the decade of 80's remained mainly overshadowed by the events in Afghanistan and also to hostile Indian posturing. In April 1981, after taking over the US Presidency, Mr. Ronald Reagan, offered loans and grants amounting to three billion dollars over five year. It also agreed to consider the sale of 40 F-16 aircraft.[30] "For every dollar supplied by the US, another was added by the Saudi Arabian government."[31]

Resumption of US aid was not due to any new found love for Pakistan but to make sure that Pakistan continued to support Afghan freedom struggle and thereby hurt Soviet Union. Target was neither to benefit Pakistan or Afghanistan but all US efforts were aimed at harming the Soviet Union. "Pakistan chose not to accept concessional loans for military sales and instead opted to pay the market rate of interest, so as to safeguard its non-aligned credentials. India raised a lot of hue and cry on US military sales to Pakistan, although India itself had signed a deal with Soviet

Union for latest aircrafts, tanks etc for a giveaway price of $ 1.6 billion, though the market value was estimated at US $ 6 billion.[32]

After returning to power in 1980, Indra Gandhi expressed grave concern over Pakistan's quest for nuclear weapons. In 1981, Indian Air Force conducted a study that attack on Kahuta uranium enrichment plant was feasible. On 20 December 1982, the Washington Post reported that nine months earlier Indian military planners had prepared a plan to strike at Kahuta and PINSTECH. The possibility of collaborating with Israel for such an attack was also considered.[33] Soviet Union repeatedly threatened Pakistan for its support to the Afghan freedom fighters. With more than hundred thousand Soviet troops in Afghanistan, Pakistan had to take Indo-Soviet threats seriously.

Pakistan found itself sandwiched between Indian ally Soviet Union in the west and India in the east. Pakistan had no option but to continue its endeavours for nuclear weapons and to immediately modernise and restructure its armed forces. Indian threats were too menacing to be ignored. Any attack on its nuclear installations would have resulted in a war. Therefore HQ 30 Corps was raised on 26 November 84 to articulate defensive manoeuvre in Ravi-Chenab corridor. HQ 1 Corps was thus spared exclusively for offensive manoeuvre. Indian belligerence had thus once again forced Pakistan to strengthen its military.

SIACHIN CONFLICT

While Pakistan was busy managing Afghan refugees and effects of Afghan civil war, India took advantage of the situation and quietly moved troops into Pakistani territory of Siachin in 1984. Compared to it, Pakistan in 1962 had refused to take advantage of Indian defeat at the hands of China.

Siachen is bounded by Indra Koli pass in the northwest, point NJ-9842 in the south and Karakorum pass in the east. Siachen Glacier, which lies on the western extremity of this triangle, is 72 kilometres long with its width varying from 3.2 to 12.8 kilometres.

Prior to Indian occupation, all international expeditions used to obtain permission from Government of Pakistan for mountaineering in Siachin area.

NJ-9842 was the mutually agreed terminal point between Pakistan and India as per Karachi and Shimla Agreements. Karakorum pass was the mutually agreed terminal point between Pakistan and China as per Pakistan China border agreement of 1962.[34] Pakistan logically concluded that the imaginary line joining NJ-9842 and the Karakorum pass defined the Cease Fire Line (CFL) and later Line of Control (LOC).

In April 1984, India sent its troops to occupy a part of the glaciated area. When Pakistan army moved to Siachen in late April 1984, Indians were already in occupation of its dominating features. India's military intrusion into Pakistani territory deeply alarmed the government of Pakistan.

From 1984 to 1985, both armies consolidated their positions and remained busy in inducting high-altitude survival and protection equipment to survive against extreme cold weather. However, starting in 1986, Indian army under took some offensive operations against Pakistani posts and further destabilized the area. In response, Pakistan army was forced to take measures to defeat Indian designs. A brief account of these operations is given in ensuing paragraphs.

In April 1986, a post was established at an altitude of 21,600 feet by Pakistan army on the eastern flank (right shoulder) of Bilafond La. It was named as Quaid post. The top served as an ideal observation post from where Indian rear areas could be observed and interdicted. Prior to this, left shoulder of the Bilafond La had been secured by 7 Northern Light Infantry, by establishing Rana post in April 1986. Indians also established an observation post near-by called Akbar post. Indians attacked Rana post and captured it on 11 May 1986. It was a big loss as it finished Pakistan's hold on the left shoulder of the pass. Quaid observation post had limited space and could house only ten persons.

On 29 May 1987, Indians tried to capture the Quaid post. The attack was beaten back. On 22 June 1987, at 3 pm Indians started shelling the post. It continued till night 25-26 June 1987 when the next attack was launched. Indian soldiers tried to climb the post under cover of artillery fire but the attack stalled at around 2:30 am on 26 June. Indians resumed the attack the next day. Intensity of artillery fire also increased around 10:30 am on 26 June and it continued till 4 pm. By this time Pakistani troops had exhausted their ammunition and it could not be replenished. The observation post therefore fell to the Indians. Pakistani artillery support proved inadequate as there were only two field guns and one heavy mortar in the area. Additionally, there was no artillery observer at the post on the day of attack.

In 1987, Pakistan army decided to recapture Rana and Quaid posts. 21 August 1987 was fixed as the D Day. The operation was preceded by artillery fire from 21 to 22 September. On night 22-23 September, two combat teams attacked Rana post and one team attacked Akbar post. At 7 am 23 September, due to day light, both combat teams were observed by the Indians and the attack stalled due to Indian artillery fire. On night 24-25 September, Pakistani troops resumed their attack but were again engaged by Indian artillery. In the meantime, Indians reinforced Rana from Akbar post. Due to heavy causalities the attack was called off.

In April 1989, an operation was undertaken by Pakistan army in Chumik sector. Chumik glacier lies within Bilafond La sector. It separates from it at a distance of approximately four kilometres northeast of Gyari. Highest feature in the south is point 22158, now called Naveed top. This feature became the focal point in the Chumik Operation. Point 22158 remained vacant till hostilities erupted in the area. On 12 April 1989, Pakistani helicopter reconnaissance revealed that the Indians had established five new bases and posts in the Chumik area. Indians started engaging Pakistani posts and base with artillery and mortar fire restricting their move to night hours only.

On 19 April 1989, it was decided to drop soldiers of 9 Azad Kashmir Regiment and Special Service Group at the base of point 22158. Lt Naveed (later Sitara Jurat) volunteered to be the first to be dropped at the objective. Proper harnesses were not available therefore he was tied to a sling with an improvised harness made of ropes. The first helicopter took off at 9:30 am and dropped the officer on a small flat area at the base of point 22158 (now Naveed base). Subsequently, Naik Yaqoob, a Special Service Group Commando (later Sitara Jurat) also joined Lt Naveed. Additional men and logistics had been planned but unfavourable weather made further flying impossible. On the third day i.e., 21 April 1989, the weather cleared. Capt. Kamran (Later Sitara Jurat) and eight more soldiers were immediately dropped. They found Lieutenant Naveed and Naik Yaqoob still alive despite heavy odds of extreme cold weather and lack of logistics. Now it was a race between Pakistani and Indian troops to reach the peak. Naik Muhammad Aslam and Sepoy Said Jan started climbing. At the top, they saw eight Indian soldiers at a distance of 300 to 400 meters. They fired and forced the Indians to withdraw. Due to success of this operation, Pakistani troops started dominating the sector. Negotiating from the position of strength, Pakistan forced India to withdraw to pre Chumik operation positions. Indians also vacated Saltoro watershed as it was no more defendable.

Another operation was under taken in Chullung in July 1992. Chullung is located immediately northwest of NJ 9842 and on the southernmost extremity of Siachen Glacier. Due to Chullung position, Indians dominated the surrounding area. Occupation of a ridge called Commando ridge, could give Pakistani troops domination over Indian main supply route to Siachen Glacier through River Nubra. 1 Azad Kashmir Regiment had been in Gyong sector in Siachen since 15 March 1992. Besides defence of a challenging sector, the unit was tasked to reconnoitre Commando ridge for establishment of an observation post. On 31 July 1992, two platoons along with company tactical headquarters started advancing at 4 pm. Once they started climbing towards

Commando ridge, Indians opened fire. Leading troops fell back to the base. At first light on 1 August 1992, troops of platoon climbing the reverse slope also came under enemy fire. All types of small arms fire made progress of the attack very difficult. Ultimately the attack failed. Nine officers and thirty-one Pakistani soldiers were killed in the operation.

INDIAN EXERCISE BRASS TACKS -1986

Despite Pakistan's best efforts to avoid two front scenarios, during Afghan freedom struggle, India continuously endeavoured to harass Pakistan to facilitate Soviet Union and also to take advantage of Pakistan's preoccupation with civil war in Afghanistan. India never lost any opportunity to harm, harass or create problems for Pakistan. Pakistan on the other hand spent most of its resources and time in trying to survive as a sovereign nation against constant hegemonic Indian designs. In 1984, Pakistan received information from a friendly country about an imminent Indian attack on Kahuta nuclear facilities.[35] Pakistan informed India that any such attack would be taken as an act of aggression. In December 1985, Pakistan and India formally agreed to refrain from attacking each other's nuclear facilities.[36] Unfortunately India only understood the language of power. Despite such recent brinkmanship, India embarked on highly provocative largest combined military exercise in South Asian history, code named Brass Tacks in the winters of 1986-87. The exercise envisaged concentration of a quarter of a million troops, nine army divisions, five independent armoured brigades, and 1,300 tanks in western Rajasthan, hardly 50 kilometres from Pakistani border. It gave India capability to launch at a short notice, a surgical strike against central Pakistan.[37] Contrary to existing understanding between the two countries, Indian government did not give any prior information about the exercise. Pakistan became suspicious when its specific requests for details of the exercise were not answered. As a precaution, Pakistan army first extended its winter exercises and later, in December 1986, moved its strategic formations to south of river Sutlej and west of

Sialkot. In spite of their own military concentration, India termed Pakistani troops movement as provocative.[38] The crisis peaked in January 1987 when Indian government demanded a pullback of Pakistani forces 'within 24 hours'. India agreed to talks when their own troop concentration was pointed out. An agreement was signed on 4 February 87, at Delhi for sector-by-sector disengagement and moving troops to their peace locations. Later "Scholarly research concluded: 'Exercise Brass Tacks may have had much larger goals than merely to test the preparedness of the Indian army. These goals appear to have been open-ended."[39] Exercise Brass Tacks took the two countries to the brink of an all-out war. Indian brinkmanship forced Pakistan government and military leadership to do a rethink of their preparedness for war. Many shortfalls were identified and decisions taken to rectify them. Indian belligerence and aggressive acts further alarmed Pakistan. In May 1987, Indian external affairs minister visited Afghanistan for the seventh session of the Indo-Afghan Joint Commission. In a press conference he accused Pakistan of obtaining arms against India.[40] In June 87, Indian fighter aircraft escorted by An-32 transports, violating Sri Lankan air space to drop supplies to Tamil rebels. The message was very clear for the neighbouring countries including Pakistan as to who was the bully in the region.

United States increased covert allocations for supply of arms to Afghan Mujahideen, from $ 250 million in 1985, to $ 470 million in 1986 and $ 630 million in 1987.[41] "US had arranged another aid package for Pakistan in March 1986, for $ 4.02 billion."[42] It was decided to use US aid to raise new formations and units to reduce operational imbalances in the army to meet emerging Indian military threats. Raising of new formation headquarters and units started in earnest in 1987 and continued till 1991. HQ 31 Corps was raised in June 1986 for defence of Bahawalpur sector. 40 and 41 Infantry Divisions were raised on 2 September 1987.

In 1986, Mr. Mohammed Khan Junejo took over as the Prime Minister of Pakistan though Gen Zia continued as the President. Elections were held in Indian occupied Kashmir on 31 March 1987. These elections were as unfree and as unfair as all the previous elections in Indian held Kashmir. With hope in peaceful process betrayed, the shocked and disillusioned Kashmiri population resorted to 'other means' to secure their fundamental rights. A popular uprising was thus born. The more radical Kashmiri youth turned to militancy.[43]

On 10 December 1987, Soviet leader Mr. Gorbachev announced withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan within twelve months of the conclusion of Geneva Accord. Geneva Accord was signed by foreign ministers of Pakistan, Afghanistan, Soviet Union and Secretary of State of USA on 14 April 1988. It was the first time Soviet Union had agreed to withdraw from what they termed a 'fraternal' state.[44]

On 29 May 1988 Gen Zia dismissed the government of Mr. Junejo on the grounds of inefficiency.[45] On 17 August 1988, Gen Zia died in an aircraft accident and was succeeded by Gen Aslam Beg as the Chief of Army Staff. Mr. Ghulam Ishaq Khan, the Chairman of Senate took over as the President. In national elections held in November 88, Pakistan People's Party won the majority and formed government at Islamabad.[46] In 1989, Kashmiri freedom struggle gained momentum for which India accused Pakistan of involvement. Indian posturing caused tension along the Line of Control.

Free from running the government, army under Gen Aslam Beg concentrated on its training and developing new doctrines. With Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan there was a paradigm shift in the regional security situation in 1989. Pakistan army troops on its western borders were now free to be shifted to its border with India in case of a war. Gen Beg therefore planned the biggest ever army exercise called Zarb-e-Momin from 17 to 20 December 1989. The exercise was designed to validate the

strategy of riposte against India.[47] India was notified of the exercise well in time.[48] The exercise was a great success and resulted in army adopting the riposte strategy as opposed to purely defensive strategy.

In 1990, freedom struggle in Indian occupied Kashmir further intensified. A worried Indian government brought Jagmohan Malhotra as the governor of Kashmir in January 1990. His preferred strategy for pacifying the alienated Kashmiri population was terror and oppression. This strategy further alienated the people.[49] As situation in Kashmir continued to deteriorate, senior military officials in India reportedly recommended air strikes on targets in Pakistan. The report triggered anxiety in the western capitals about fear of a war escalating to a nuclear exchange. In May 1990, the President of the United States sent Robert Gates, assistant to the National Security Council, to Islamabad and Delhi. US diplomacy helped defuse Indian belligerent designs.[50] However the threat of use of force by India once again proved to Pakistani nation that they could not trust Indians.

On 2 August 1990, Iraq invaded Kuwait and annexed it. The world was shocked at the naked aggression against a small neighbouring country. Had the world acted against Indian naked aggression against Pakistan in 1971, maybe Iraq would have thought twice before invading Kuwait. Soon US troops landed in Saudi Arabia to protect it against further aggression by Iraq.

In Pakistan, President G. I. Khan dismissed the government of Mrs. Benazir Bhutto on 6 August 1990 on the charges of corruption and inefficiency.[51] In October 90, USA imposed sanctions on Pakistan under Pressler Amendment. Pressler Amendment had been enacted in 1985. From 1985 till 1989 the US needed Pakistan in its fight against Soviet Union; therefore, the US President kept on certifying that Pakistan did not possess nuclear weapons. After withdrawal of Soviet troops from Afghanistan in 1989, Pakistan became irrelevant to overall US interests in the region. Therefore in 1990 the US President refused

to certify that Pakistan did not have nuclear weapons resulting in imposition of sanctions. The US immediately cut off $ 700 million annual aid it had pledged to provide from 1988 to 1994. It even declined to deliver F-16 and other weapons for which Pakistan had already made the payments. Apart from stoppage of weapons, USA stopped all training of Pakistani military officers. The US decision revived the bitter memories of Pakistan's past grievances (In 1965) against the US refusal to honour commitments.[52]

After Gen Beg's retirement, Gen Asif Nawaz took over as new Army Chief on 17 August 1991. Situation in Afghanistan by then was deteriorating with every passing day. After withdrawal of Soviet forces, Najibullah's government fought on for nearly three years before collapsing in April 1992. The collapse was unfortunately followed by protracted war for power between mujahideen political cum military groups.[53] All efforts by Pakistani government to broker peace among warring Afghan factions failed to bear fruit.

Within Pakistan, law and order also came under stress in the Sindh province, especially in the port city of Karachi. On 28 May 92, the government ordered army to launch operation 'Clean up' to rid the province of criminal elements. During rest of 92, HQ 5 Corps remained busy fighting criminals in urban and rural Sindh.

Almost after two years of US sanctions on training of Pakistani military officers in USA under Pressler Amendment, in November 1992, a high-level Pakistan army delegation under Inspector General Training and Evaluation visited China to explore possibility of training selected officers in China. It was the first time Pakistan Army was looking east for training. (Author was part of the delegation as a Maj)

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CHAPTER 5

THE YEARS OF SANCTIONS AND ISOLATION, 1993 TO 2000

Pakistan army was still in the process of evaluating the impact of Pressler sanctions that on 8 January 1993, Gen Asif Nawaz died of a heart attack. He was succeeded by Gen Abdul Waheed Kakar as the new Chief of Army Staff.[1] Pakistan's political stability was put into tail spin when on 18 April 93; President Mr. Ghulam Ishaq Khan dismissed the government of Mr. Nawaz Sharif on the grounds of corruption and mismanagement. On 26 May 93, the Supreme Court however reinstated Nawaz Sharif government. The government had come to almost a stand still due to rift between the President and Prime Minister. Gen Kakar intervened and convinced both the President and the Prime Minister to resign on 18 July.[2] People's Party under Mrs. Benazir Bhutto won the elections held in October 93.

The civil war in Afghanistan continued without respite in 1993. Despite best efforts of Pakistan, different factions of mujahideen could not agree on a unified government at Kabul. The civil war not only destroyed Kabul city but also sent additional refugees to Pakistan. 1994 saw the emergence of Taliban in a village near Kandahar. Afghan people, especially the Pashtuns, welcomed Taliban as they were fed up of the warlords and yearned for peace. Kandahar was captured by Taliban without a fight and Helmand, Imroz, Uruzgan and Zabul fell in quick succession.[3]

Freedom struggle in Indian held Kashmir also continued unabated. All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) comprising some thirty political parties was held in February 1993. APHC was united in their demand for the right of self-determination and freedom for the people of Jammu and Kashmir. To suppress people's demands, Indian atrocities increased manifold.[4] Indian

government accused Pakistan of providing training and arms to the freedom fighters. Pakistan denied these accusations saying it only provided political, diplomatic and moral support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in their just cause. [5]

In January 1996, Gen Jehangir Karamat took over as the new Chief of Army Staff after the retirement of Gen Kakar. The same year, Mr. Farooq Leghari, the President of Pakistan, dismissed the government of Mrs. Bhutto on the night 4-5 November 1996.[6]

In Afghanistan, in September 1996, the Taliban burst forth again and rapidly penetrated the eastern Pushtoon provinces. First, they captured Jalalabad and then on 27 September, 1996 entered Kabul. Their advance was halted in the northern provinces held by Tajiks and Uzbeks.[7]

In Pakistan, Mr. Nawaz Sharif won the elections held on 17 February 1997.[8] Taliban government was recognised by Pakistan in May 1997. It provoked international disapproval and criticism. The Tajik, Uzbek and Hazara parties in Afghanistan denounced Pakistan's decision.[9] Taliban meanwhile succeeded in capturing Mazar-I-Sharif and most of the northern provinces in 1998.[10] The world kept on blaming Pakistan for the misdeeds of the Taliban.

On 11 and 13 May 1998, India conducted multiple nuclear tests. Indian leaders started threatening Pakistan. Home minister L K Advani boasted of shift in the balance of power in the region. Another minister, K L Sharma asserted India was 'now in a position to take control of Azad Kashmir.' Pakistan was disappointed but not surprised by Indian threats. Indian belligerent stance, once again put Pakistan on the horns of dilemma. To test or not to test was the big question being discussed among the policy makers at that time?[11] The Western world led by USA, immediately honed onto Pakistan to prevent it from going overtly nuclear. Promises of aid and arms, and threats of further sanctions were used to keep Pakistan in line. USA had however failed to realise that it had already lost credibility with Pakistan. Pakistan was facing many sanctions so threat of a few more could not deter

it from taking action against an existential Indian threat to its sovereignty. Consequently, Pakistan went nuclear on 28 May 1998. While the world denounced Pakistan, Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee said on the same day (28 May 98) that the Pakistani tests had created a 'new' situation.[12] Pakistan's timely response to Indian nuclear blackmail resulted in strategic stability in the region. In a joint declaration issued on 12 February 1999, the prime ministers of the two countries declared, 'the nuclear dimension of the security environment of the two countries adds to their responsibility for avoidance of conflict.[13] Once again it was India which introduced nuclear weapons in the region without realizing the consequences of such an act. Pakistan as usual was left with no choice but to go nuclear to survive as a sovereign nation.

In October 1998, Gen Jehangir Karamat resigned after his remarks about need of a National Security Council, created debate in the media. Gen Pervez Musharraf was thereafter appointed as the new Chief of Army Staff.

OPERATION KOH PAIMA (KARGIL CONFLICT)

In 1998, due to India's difficulty in managing the Kashmir insurgency, the entire Line of Control (LOC) had heated up.[14] Exchange of small arms fire, heavier direct firing weapons and artillery duels along the LOC became more frequent and intense.[15] The artillery duels in the area of 12 Division in Neelum Sector and in Gilgit Baltistan aimed at interdiction of vulnerable and operationally significant supply routes on either side of LOC by the adversaries. From 1992 onwards, Neelum valley road had remained under Indian artillery and small arms fire, which finally resulted in road's closure in 1994.[16] In response to Indian interdiction, Pakistan's 10 Corps tried to find a solution to resolve the Neelum valley problem. One way was to interdict vulnerable Indian lines of communication, which Pakistan did along the Dras–Kargil road with direct and indirect fire, starting in 1996. "As a backup to understanding the Kargil conflict it needs to be

stressed that Kargil was not a one-off operation, but the latest in a series of moves and countermoves at a tactical level by India and Pakistan along the LOC in the inaccessible, snowbound Northern Areas (Now Gilgit Baltistan). India would capture a location where they felt that our (Pakistan) presence was thin, and vice-versa. This is how they managed to occupy Siachen."[17] In October 1998, India claimed it had beaten back two Pakistani attacks on 16 and 18 October, in the area of the Siachen Glacier. Pakistan was surprised to know about the Indian claims as it had not launched any attacks. Subsequently, in late October and early November 1998, reports came of another five such make-believe attacks.[18]

"Pakistan's Military Operations and Military Intelligence Directorates at General Headquarters were instructed to carry out an assessment of the situation. During this time, Indians continued to report more "attacks." The assessment was formally presented at the end of December 1998. It was realized that the number and frequency of reported attacks were unprecedented and could possibly be used by the Indians as a casus bello to launch an operation against Pakistan. Pakistan had intelligence through various sources suggesting an Indian plan to conduct some operations in Northern Areas. There was specific information of a possible Indian attack in the Shaqma sector; it was aimed at positions Pakistan had used to shell the road between Dras and Kargil in early summer 1998, in response to continuous artillery shelling by the Indians at the Neelum Valley Road on Pakistani side of the Line of Control."[19]

The presence of 70 and 114 Brigades ex 3 Indian Infantry Division in Dras Kargil area during winters of 98-99 was contrary to previous years practice. Frequent visits of Indian Defence minister further strengthened the suspicion about an Indian threat developing in this sector. General belief among Pakistani military commanders was that India wanted to do another Siachin by using 70 Brigade troops to occupy vacant areas along LOC during winter of 98- 99. It was thought that as mujahideen used these

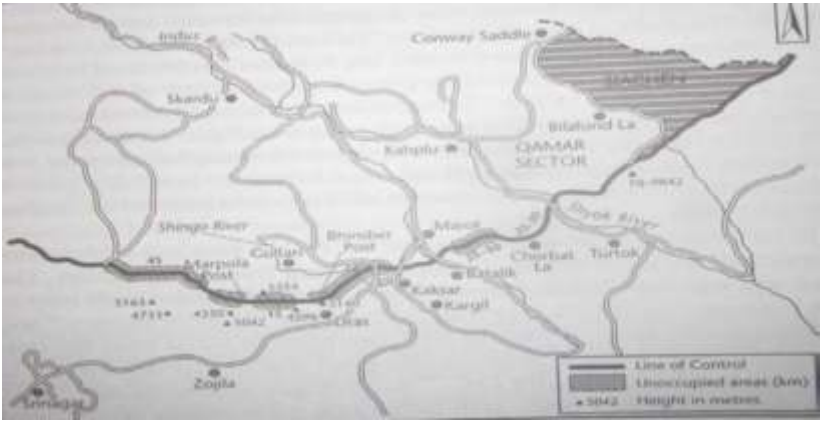
vacant areas to move to and from Indian occupied Kashmir, India would like to seal these routes and also supposedly punish Pakistan by occupying areas north of LOC. India had done it in Siachin with no adverse international reaction to its actions and unless Pakistan took measure it could happen again.[20]

"Having been alerted to intensified Indian moves in the Shaqma Sector, HQ 10 Corps on instructions from the Military Operations Directorate, directed Force Commander Northern Areas (FCNA) to carry out an assessment of the situation and to take defensive measures in order to forestall Indian threat and avoid being caught off-guard.[21] India had been "creeping forward" across the LOC even after the Shimla Agreement, signed in 1972, despite a defined Line of Control. India had tested Pakistan at Chorbat La, the Qamar sector and Siachen in the Northern Areas. Finally, frequent visits of the Indian defence minister, George Fernandes, to the Siachen and Kargil areas during the summer and autumn of 1998 suggested to Pakistan that India was considering more offensive operations.[22]

Against the perceived Indian threat, the Rawalpindi Corps was ordered to prepare and present the FCNA plan of the defensive manoeuvre in the Northern Areas (Gilgit Baltistan) to deny any ingress by India across the LOC. A plan calling for plugging the gaps ranging from nine to twenty-eight miles (fifteen to forty-five kilometres) between Pakistani positions was formally presented and approved toward the middle of January 1999.[23] The defensive measures were undertaken (under the name of operation Koh Paima) at the end of March 1999.[24] The manoeuvre was conducted flawlessly. By the end of April, the unoccupied gaps along seventy-five miles (120 kilometres) of the LOC had been secured by over 100 new posts of ten to twenty persons each.[25]

The troops were told to take up positions along defendable terrain (water shed) which at most of the places was south of the LOC. It was purely a defensive manoeuvre with tactical aims. As India had many a times ignored LOC especially in Siachin,

therefore alignment of LOC was not taken as a constraint while taking defensive positions against expected Indian attacks. Staying short of strategically important Dras - Kargil- Leh road proves the point that it was a defensive manoeuvre.[26]



Map 31.
Siachin and Kargil Areas. Source: Shireen Mazari, The Kargil Conflict 1999.[27]

It appears that beyond the immediate tactical level assessment, there was no overall strategic assessment of the politico- military fallout or unintended consequences - primarily because the contemplated manoeuvre, at the FCNA level, was seen purely in tactical and defensive terms.[28] This is further supported by the statement of Gen Musharraf that, "there was no deliberate offensive operation planned, and moving to the unoccupied gaps along the line of control was not a violation of any agreement and was well within the purview of the local commander."[29]

"323 Brigade occupied some of the dominating features overlooking Turtok by the third week of April 1999 in order to allow better observation of Indian activities and to provide flank protection to Pakistan's vulnerable posts in the Chorbat La sector. The battalions also readjusted and reinforced existing posts and

complexes, especially the vulnerable and threatened ones.

62 Brigade (3, 5, 8 NLI battalions and 69 Baloch) readjusted battalion defences with emphasis on reinforcement of vulnerable posts and complexes of the Indus sector. There were large gaps between 323 and 62 Brigades in Ladakh range; therefore 62 Brigade occupied vacant heights and features to cover Indian approaches through the Gragrabar and Gragrio Nullahs.

80 Brigade (6, 11, 12, and 13 NLI battalions) also readjusted defences in their area and reinforced vulnerable posts. The watersheds in Shaqma and Buniyal sectors were occupied to guard against Indian approaches since they were sensitive to defence of the Shaqma sector. In the Gultari sector, features overlooking Batakulain Nullah were also occupied.[30]"

On Pakistani side, the Rawalpindi Corps was being commanded by Lt Gen Mehmud Ahmed. Commander FCNA was Maj Gen (Retired as Lt Gen) Javed Hasan.

On the Indian side the LOC was being defended by 28 Division, west of Zojila pass with four brigades (53, 104, 109 and 268) and 3 Division east of Zojila pass with 121 Brigade at Kargil, 102 Brigade at Siachin, 70 Brigade at Ladakh and 114 Brigade at east Ladakh. 121 Brigade had 16 Grenadiers at Dras, 4 Jat at Kaksar, 8 BSF at Channigund and 3 Punjab at Batalik.[31] The first sighting of Pakistani troops (62 Brigade) was on 3 May 99 by a Sheppard in Batalik area.[32] In Shyok (Turtok) (323 Brigade) sector an Indian patrol was ambushed on 6 May. Thereafter Indian army sent out patrols along all five previously vacant areas.[33] On the night of 9-10 May, Pakistan artillery shelled area near Headquarters 121 Indian infantry Brigade in Kargil. Some shells hit the brigade ammunition point.[34] Assessment of Indian army by 12 May 99 was that about 100 to 150 jihadis had infiltrated in Batalik sector.[35] On 13 May 99, due to Pakistan artillery fire a bridge on road Dras-Kargil was damaged. On 15 May, Pakistan artillery interdicted Indian military vehicular movement in Kargil area. "It led to Indian probing attacks all along the frontage till end

May 1999. As a result of the Indian probing attacks, fighting patrols were pushed forward by Pakistani units for early warning, depth and flank protection."[36] On 15 May, Indian army revised their assessment to 250 to 300 jihadis.[37] Even on 19 May, Indian 15 Corps maintained that it was a local counter insurgency operation. The Indian Corps however inducted 56 Brigade of 8 Division to Dras area by 19 May. One brigade of 6 Division was also cleared to move to the area. 70 Brigade was made responsible for Batalik sector.[38] Pakistani observers at Tololing and point 5140 interdicted Indian army built up and movement along Dras Kargil road. On night 22 - 23 May, 56 Brigade under 3 Division attacked Tololing.[39] The attack was led by 18 Grenadiers. When the troops reached near the objective from three directions, a heavy volume of artillery fire was directed against them from observation post at Point 5140. As a result, all companies were pinned down in the open. The attack failed. Only then the Indians realised that they were not facing jihadis but regular army troops.[40]

On 25 May, during Cabinet Committee on Security (CSS), Indian government finally became clear about the situation and decided to react with full force including air force.[41] Despite failure on 22-23 May to capture Tololing, 56 Brigade launched 1 Naga on 27 May to secure point 5140 to cut off Tololing from the rear. When the Nagas got close to the objective, they were subjected to fire. The company commander and thirteen soldiers were wounded. Point 5140 could not be captured.[42] The same day Pakistani troops shot down a MiG 27 and a MiG 21 in Batalik sector. One of the pilots landed in Pakistani territory and was captured. The next day an Indian Mi 17 attack helicopter was shot down near Tololing feature.[43] On 29 May, in the western Batalik sector, Indian 1 Bihar (70 Brigade) attacked point 4268. The attack failed due to effective defence by Pakistani troops.[44] "On night 27-28 May 1999, at about 7:30 pm, Indians engaged point 5140 with intense artillery fire.

While Pakistan considered the whole issue as a local tactical one, the Indian Government got involved at the highest level.

India decided to exploit it by escalating it to strategic level and to reflect Pakistan as an irresponsible nation. By involvement of Air Force and violation of Pakistan's air space, India escalated the conflict and rejected all peaceful means to resolve the issue. The new BJP government wanted to flex its military muscles and impose Indian hegemony in the region.

By end May, India inducted additional formations in Kargil sector and readjusted the responsibilities. 8 Division was made responsible for Mushkoh (79 Brigade) and Dras (56 Brigade) sectors. 3 Division was made responsible for Kaksar (121 Brigade), Batalik (70 Brigade) and Turtok (102 Brigade).[45] Additional forces inducted in the area by India till 10 June 1999, included 69 Mountain Brigade ex 6 Division, 56 and 192 Mountain Brigades ex 8 Mountain Division, 70 Brigade ex 3 Infantry Division and 79 Brigade ex 19 Division. 24 artillery regiments were inducted which included 8x BOFORS guns regiments. Approximately 4-5 Para/Commando battalions, three BSF battalions and one CRPF battalion were also inducted.[46]

Indians had detected compromising of the LOC on 3 May. It was by 25 May that they ascertained the magnitude of areas lost. All attacks to evict Pakistani troops from their positions during May failed with heavy losses to Indians. Therefore, in June, Indians selected a few critical areas and sequentially attacked them after concentrating overwhelming artillery and infantry to ensure success. June also witnessed international opinion turning against Pakistan due to effective Indian propaganda and diplomacy. Despite Pakistan's efforts to contain the conflict and resolve it through negotiations, India kept escalating it, opting for a military solution.

After detailed preparations, 56 Indian Brigade commenced its second attack on Tololing on 12 June. Point 4590 being at a limb was lost on 13 June.[47]"Indians cleared point 5140 just north of point 4590 on 20 June.[48] In Batalik sector, point 5203 being on the eastern edge of the feature was lightly held. It was attacked by one

Indian brigade and lost on 21-22 June.[49] Point 5140 in Tololing sector and point 5203 in Batalik sector were the only important gains by Indians before Pakistan unilaterally agreed to withdraw north of LOC on 4 July.

Most of the times, Indians launched brigade attacks to secure posts held by as few as eight to ten Pakistani troops. These attacks gained little ground until middle of June.[50] Indians attacked only a limited number of posts in each sub-sector at any one time, thereby ensuring maximum concentration of infantry and artillery. The attack on Tololing Ridge was supported by 120 artillery guns which pounded the ridge for more than four hours, firing at least 10,000 shells (50,000 kg of TNT) before initiating the assault. Despite this massive effort, Indians could not clear the whole ridge.[51]

In Kargil, Indian army attacked with overwhelming numerical superiority. In majority of cases, attacks succeeded when the ratio went as high as 9:1.[52] Supported with unprecedented artillery fire and bombing by IAF, Indians managed some gains in Batalik, Dras and Shyok sector, while the Kaksar and Mushkoh areas remained untouched.[53] Notwithstanding the expansion by India of the military dynamics of the conflict, at the time of the withdrawal by Pakistan, India had managed to retake only 10-11% of the area.[54] All supposedly heroic attacks by Indians and capturing of area after 4 July were actually occupation of area vacated by Pakistani troops.

On the Indian side, "nearly fifty fire units comprising artillery guns, howitzers, mortars and one rocket battery were employed in the area of operations for various purposes, for destroying given objectives, for supporting the infantry attacks and for carrying out counter bombardment. In all, these units fired nearly 250,000 rounds/ rockets over a period of ninety days. The medium guns fired nearly 30 percent of the total ammunition. Sometimes, in a space of five minutes, over 1200 rounds of high explosives were fired on objectives such as point 4875, Tololing and Tiger Hill."[55]

Pakistan Artillery was responsible for 83% of the Indian casualties.[56] Indian analysts estimate that as much as 70 to 80 percent of the losses on both sides were due to artillery fire.[57]

Prior to the ceasefire, Pakistan suffered 157 martyrs and 250 wounded. It was during the withdrawal phase that Pakistan suffered 200 martyrs and 415 wounded.[58]

Despite all criticism of operation Koh Paima, it proved some important points. Pakistan had always highlighted that Kashmir being disputed area, remained a flash point for a war between Pakistan and India and therefore must be resolved through peaceful means. Kargil conflict almost took the two nuclear states to the brink of a war. In Kashmir, the armies of Pakistan and India are deployed all along the LOC eye ball to eye ball. Unless the issue is resolved, there will always be chances of a tactical action getting escalated to strategic levels. In Kargil, Pakistan's tactical actions resulted in Indian strategic response. Pakistan exercised restraint and avoided escalation, although India by moving bulk of artillery of its strategic formations had created imbalance in its forces. Any strategic offensive across international border by Pakistan could have exploited this imbalance but it entailed risk of escalating the war to nuclear level. Kargil conflict also highlighted Pakistan's resolve to take risks for the sake of Kashmir cause. Kargil conflict told the world that Indian non seriousness about resolving Kashmir dispute could be very dangerous for the Subcontinent.

In the political field, Kargil conflict resulted in mistrust between the political government of Mr. Nawaz Sharif and the army leadership. On 12 October 1999, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif announced the retirement of COAS Gen Pervez Musharraf when the latter was on his way back from a visit of Sri Lanka. The army reacted to this announcement and took over the government in a bloodless coup.[59] Gen Pervez Musharraf took over as the next ruler of the country after landing at Karachi.[60]

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[3] Sattar, Pakistan's Foreign Policy, 199.
[4] Sattar, Pakistan's Foreign Policy, 192.
[5] Sattar, Pakistan's Foreign Policy, 193.
[6] Cloughely, A History of Pakistan Army, 335.
[7] Sattar, Pakistan's Foreign Policy, 200.
[8] Cloughely, A History of Pakistan Army, 335.
[9] Sattar, Pakistan's Foreign Policy, 240.
[10] Sattar, Pakistan's Foreign Policy, 200.
[11] Sattar, Pakistan's Foreign Policy, 223.
[12] Sattar, Pakistan's Foreign Policy, 227.
[13] Sattar, Pakistan's Foreign Policy, 227.
[14] Peter R. Lavoy, *Asymmetric Warfare in South Asia: the Causes and Consequences of the Kargil Conflict,* New York: Cambridge University Press, 56.
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[17] Pervez Musharraf, *In Line of Fire,* New York: Free Press, 2006, 87.
[18] Musharraf, In the Line of Fire, 87.
[19] Musharraf, In the Line of Fire, 87.
[20] Interview of Lt Gen Retd Jamil Haider on 28 May 15 at Lahore by Author of the book. He was commander artillery FCNA during Kargil conflict.
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[22] Musharraf, In the Line of Fire, 90.
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[26] Interview of Lt Gen Retd Jamil Haider on 28 May 15 at Lahore by Author of the book.
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[28] Mazari, The Kargil Conflict, 1999, 47.
[29] Musharraf, In the Line of Fire, 95.
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[33] Malik, Kargil from Surprise to Victory, 96.
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[38] Malik, Kargil from Surprise to Victory, 117.
[39] Malik, Kargil: From Surprises to Victory, 149.
[40] Malik, Kargil: From Surprises to Victory, 158.
[41] Kalyan, Blood on the Snow, 100.
[42] Malik, Kargil from Surprise to Victory, 158.
[43] Mazari, The Kargil Conflict, 52.
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[46] Mazari, The Kargil Conflict, 52.
[47] Malik, Kargil from Surprise to Victory, 162.
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[52] Malik, Kargil From Surprise to Victory, 217.
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CHAPTER 6

THE TERROR YEARS, 2001-2017

The terrorist attacks on the World Trade Centre and the Pentagon on 11 September 2001 transformed the world politics for good. USA was outraged. India tried to take advantage of the situation and immediately declared that it wanted to support US in its fight against terrorism, hinting against Pakistan. Indian immediate offer of help and US policy of with us or with them left little choice for Pakistan. A defiant course was out of question. India had shown her eagerness to help USA. Pakistan had to pursue a strategy that would reduce risks to Pakistan's own security and strategic interests. Government of Pakistan finalised general contours of its policy before specific requests were received from the US.[1] Pakistan agreed to help USA and NATO to the extent of UN resolutions. At the same time Pakistan did not participate in US military action in Afghanistan.[2] The war on terror which Pakistan joined in 2001 is continuing till end 2017 i.e., the last year covered by this book.

US war against Afghanistan began on 27 October 2001. It was named as “Operation Enduring Freedom”. It aimed at destruction of Al Qaeda (AQ) and to replace Taliban with US friendly government. Ahmad Shah Masood’s Northern Alliance joined US and NATO forces. Unable to withstand US and NATO military might, Taliban just melted away. AQ including its leadership moved to Tora Bora. Tora Bora is 31 kilometres inside Afghanistan from Pakistan - Afghan border. To destroy AQ, coalition forces launched operation Tora Bora in December 2001. In response, Pakistan Army was deployed opposite Tora Bora in Khurram agency to seal the border to prevent terrorists moving into Pakistan. This was the first time Pakistan Army moved into Federally Administrated Tribal Agencies (FATA). FATA is one of the most varied and rugged terrain in the world. Frontier Corps

(FC), a paramilitary force, is deployed in all agencies of FATA. Seven tribal agencies from north to south are, Bajaur, Mohmand, Khyber, Orakzai, Kurram, North Waziristan (NWA) and South Waziristan (SWA).

From 2001 to 03, the government of Gen Pervez Musharraf was strong and generally popular. Majority was supportive of government policies. During this period army conducted many minor operations in FATA. Operations in FATA began in December 2001 in concert with US operations in Tora Bora in Afghanistan. Initial focus till May 02 was to seal the border against any AQ or Taliban elements moving to Pakistan. Thereafter, attention turned to the hinterland. One infantry brigade was deployed in December 2001 in Parachinar in Kurram Agency.

While Pakistan was busy facilitating the world in UN mandated fight against terrorism with all its attention on its western borders, India moved its armed forces on Pakistani border in December 2001. On 13 December 2001, five terrorists attacked Indian Parliament. Fourteen persons including the five terrorists, all of whom were Indian nationals, were killed. No outfit claimed to have carried out the attack. However much before any investigations started, on the very day of attack, many senior Indian politicians blamed Pakistan to be involved in it. Pakistan condemned the attack and vehemently denied Indian allegations. India was feeling very uncomfortable with sudden endearing of Pakistan to USA and rest of the world due to its support to fight terrorism. From being the most sanctioned nation in the late 1990s, Pakistan had become a close ally of the western world. USA had lifted sanctions and had promised military aid. India decided to malign Pakistan in attack on its Parliament despite the fact that all terrorists and the alleged facilitators were either Indian nationals or Kashmiris from Indian occupied Kashmir. Most probably the attack was either an Indian false flag operation or a response of Kashmiris against continuous Indian occupation of Kashmir against many UN resolutions. Once India moved its armed forces against the eastern borders of Pakistan in December

2001, Pakistan had no choice but to take defensive measures and moved its army to the eastern borders. Some troops engaged in war against terrorism on the western borders were also moved to the eastern borders. Indian routine of escalating the situation on Pakistan's eastern borders whenever Pakistan under took major operations against terrorists in FATA has continued till writing of this script in 2017. Despite fighting terrorists in FATA, bulk of Pakistani armed forces remained tied up against Indian threat on the eastern borders during 2002. Indian political leadership wanted a military showdown with Pakistan but due to fear of escalation to nuclear exchange and intervention of USA, war was averted.[3] The mobilization of forces cost India US $ 3.4 billion and to Pakistan US $ 1.4 billion.[4]

This standoff resulted in a big debate in India about the utility of a large standing army if conventional war was not possible in nuclear environment. The debate could have led to demilitarization and peace in the Subcontinent. Survival of Indian army as a large standing army was at stake. Indian army therefore put forward the concept of 'cold start' or 'proactive strategy.' The concept erroneously perceived the possibility of conventional war below Pakistan's nuclear threshold, as if this threshold was to be decided by the Indians. The concept increased risk of war, risk of escalation to nuclear level and instability in the region. Pakistan while engaged in war against terror was once again forced to respond to this highly destabilizing and irrational doctrine. India once again proved to be the country with aggressive designs against Pakistan as cold start doctrine was Pakistan specific. The doctrine was officially announced in April 2004.[5]

On the western borders, with the shifting of US forces focus towards Shahi Kot and Khowst province in Afghanistan, Peshawar Corps extended its deployment to the southern reaches of NWA and SWA in May 2002 with the deployment of two infantry brigades. In June 2003, FC and an infantry brigade entered Bajaur and Mohmand Agencies to clear the "no go areas" and deter any hot pursuit operations by Afghan National Army

(ANA) or NATO forces. During this period, there was no major military operation. The army employment slowly shifted from sealing of border to a series of cordon and search operations based on intelligence to apprehend any foreign fighters in Kurram, NWA and SWA. During this period, army adopted itself to the new realities of unconventional warfare and learned lessons at every step. The local population mostly remained neutral.

By mid-2002, USA felt satisfied with the results of its invasion of Afghanistan. It appeared that its politico military aims in Afghanistan had been met and it could turn its attention to other areas in the region.

There was a strong anti-Iraq lobby in USA. In October 1998 US government had passed "Iraq Liberation Act" aimed at the removal of Iraqi government i.e., regime change. Once Republicans took over US government under President Bush, they openly demanded removal of Saddam Hussain under Iraq Liberation Act. 9/11 and resultant invasion of Afghanistan temporarily diverted Republicans attention from Iraq. However, after mid-2002, once US government felt that Afghanistan had been secured, they once again turned their attention to Iraq. President Bush in his address to UNO on 12 September 2002 talked about need to invade Iraq. In October 2002 US Congress passed "Iraq resolution" authorizing the President to use "any means" against Iraq for regime change. Thus authorized, the US President assembled 100,000 US troops in Kuwait by 18 February 2003. The US propagated that Saddam regime was producing nuclear, chemical and biological weapons of mass destruction (WMD) and that these were a grave threat to the world. Under the garb of disarming the WMD, USA invaded Iraq on 19 March 2003. Baghdad fell on 9 April and rest of the country was captured by 1 May 2003. 2003 onwards, Iraq became the main theatre of combat while Afghanistan was treated as a "mission accomplished" country. The strength of US troops in Afghanistan from 2003 to 2007 remained approximately eleven thousand. Lack of attention to Afghanistan had its negative repercussions for

the country and the region. Taliban got breathing space and started reorganizing.

In end August 2003, I (author) landed in Headquarters CENTCOM, Tampa Florida as senior national representative of Pakistan army to coordinate US and Pakistan efforts in Afghanistan. All the intelligence reports coming out of Afghanistan were shared with the allies of the coalition of the willing. Soon I noticed serious mistakes in the intelligence reports. There were many spelling mistakes (Kuta for Quetta), grammar, syntax errors and factual blunders. (Reporting terrorists crossing from Pakistan to Afghanistan in pickups from a place which was a sheer cliff and even persons on foot could not cross) It was clear that the author of these reports were not Americans, the reports were fabricated and being written to support anti-Pakistan narrative. I discussed the issue with CENTCOM intelligence officer. I came to know that no CENTCOM intelligence operator in Afghanistan knew local Afghan languages and they had generally tenure of one year. US Army in Afghanistan was dependent on Afghan intelligence (NDS) for intelligence. On further inquiries, I came to know that all these reports were being generated by Afghan intelligence (NDS) which was staffed mostly by Tajiks. During the last years of Taliban rule, Tajiks had close relationship with Indian intelligence RAW. This relationship was continuing even after the fall of Afghanistan to Tajik dominated Northern Alliance. Indians abhorred the new US Pakistan friendly relations after 9/11 and were bent upon sabotaging it. They were conveniently using their special relations with the Tajik intelligence to sow the seeds of mistrust between USA and Pakistan by projecting that Pakistan was playing a double game in war against terror. I wrote a paper in late 2003 highlighting this conspiracy and predicted that if not immediately challenged, USA will stop trusting Pakistan in next four years i.e., by 2008. Unfortunately, my paper failed to convince the right quarters in Pakistan.

In December 2003, two assassination attempts were made on

the life of President of Pakistan, Gen Pervaiz Musharraf. First was on 14 December when a bomb was exploded under a bridge on Leh nullah[6] and second was a vehicle borne suicide attempt, a few hundred meters west of Leh nullah.[7] Though both the attempts failed but they jolted the military government and demonstrated the reach and power of the terrorists. Security around Gen Musharraf was further tightened.

From 2004 to 05, terrorists in FATA got better organised and started resistance against army. The formation of MMA government in KPK province had its effects on operations in FATA. In the general elections held in 2002, MMA, a coalition of religious parties won in KPK. Some of these parties were sympathetic to Afghan Taliban ideology. Some of these parties had soft corner for the local terrorists considering them as Mujahids i.e., religious fighters. MMA government in KPK at times resisted Federal government's efforts to fight terrorists.

During this period, at the army level, focus shifted to SWA as presence of foreign fighters specially those belonging to Central Asian Republics increased in Wana and Shakkai valleys close to Pakistan-Afghan border. Encounters between the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEAs) and the terrorists increased. The terrorists in SWA decided to directly confront Pakistan Army. The resulting operations conducted by Army were mainly cordon and search. However, the size of the cordon became larger as complete villages were cordoned. Army was still learning from unconventional operations. Coordination between army and FC kept on improving.

An infantry division with additional troops and Frontier Corps (FC) were inducted into Shawal valley and launched operations against the terrorists and their supporters on 18 March 04 in general areas Kalosha - Shin Warsak (near Wana). Foreign terrorists in the area enjoyed support of a local tribe called Yargul Khel, a sub tribe of Zilli Khel. It was a long and difficult operation resulting in apprehension of 160 suspects. On 9 June 2004,

terrorists attacked Inzar Cheena and Torwam posts of Army and FC in SWA. Army went on the offensive with full force. FC troops and the Political Administration were incorporated in these operations. The changed mode was military operation followed by the political process as opposed to the pre Shakkai period. An infantry division's tactical headquarters was moved on 10 June 04 with two fresh infantry brigades to Shakkai valley as it was reported to be the biggest den of local and foreign terrorists. The operation was successful. On night 17-18 June 04, Nek Muhammad a local Mahsud militant leader was killed.[8] After successful military operation in Shakkai valley, followed by a well-conceived political process, situation in Shakkai valley considerably changed. Subsequently another infantry brigade was also moved in August 2004 besides additional FC. In September 2004, second infantry division headquarters, was inducted and the area was delineated between the two Divisions on 10 September 04. First division was given SWA and second division made responsible for NWA with minor adjustments. On 9 September, predator and air strikes in Draz Langar Khel and Dilla Khula area of Mahsud triangle in SWA, forced Peshawar Corps to rush an infantry brigade to forestall Mahsud tribe's reaction, as up to this point the Corps was concentrating on the Wazir tribe's belt in SWA. This marked the beginning of fierce operations in the Mahsud area, whereas, the Wazir belt remained relatively calm. This period is also punctuated by an ambush by Abdullah Mahsud gang on the Army convoy near Dand Kach Sarwekai, SWA on 14 September 2004 and taking one soldier as hostage. It also included the ambush of an infantry battalion on 19 October 04 in the Spinkai Raghzai Bazar west of Jandola in SWA. These incidents compelled Army to undertake operation against Nanu, the village of Abdullah Mahsud (8-12 November 2004). A number of operations were conducted and Mahsud area was cleared. Their command and control, propaganda, communication and logistics infrastructure was sufficiently mauled as gleaned from the terrorist's communication intercepts of that period. During later part of 2004, military transited from a reactive to a more assertive

and proactive mode.

A ceasefire was declared between Pakistani authorities and Mahsud tribe on 8 February 2005 under Sararogha agreement. It was decided that Pakistan Army would withdraw from areas under Baitullah's control. It did not include FC troops. In exchange, Baitullah's followers would not attack government officials, impede development projects or allow foreign militants to operate in their territory. The ceasefire ended in July 2005 when Baitullah accused government of having violated the agreement and resumed attacks on security forces.

Peshawar Corps made extensive deployment for supporting Afghan elections twice in 2005 and remained equally focused on sealing the border to stop cross border infiltrations. Operations in September/October 05 resulted in considerable losses to the forces as the miscreant strength was incorrectly appreciated. However, it resulted in considerable seizures of arms, ammunition and IED material. The focus of operations remained along the Tochi Valley from Datta Khel to Mirali. There was also renewed interest in the Gurbaz area of Shawal valley of SWA which had not seen any significant activity prior to this period. Political process was underway and efforts were afoot to keep SWA calm. The operations in the SWA were dominated by patrolling including link patrols and border patrols; check posts, ambushes, and movement security. A cordon and search operation was conducted by an infantry brigade from 29 September to 2 October 05 in village Khatti Kili located west of Miran Shah to apprehend terrorists. Terrorist casualties were over fifty. Four troops were killed and 9 were injured.

In October 2005, a devastating earthquake hit the northern areas and KPK. The focus of the nation as well Army shifted from operation in FATA to restoration of earthquake affected areas. Many troops deployed against insurgents were immediately moved to the earthquake affected areas. There was relative lull between October 05 to January 06 except routine IED attacks and

raids on posts and forts.

2006 began with the killing of FC personnel at the Hassu Khel post including an officer (Capt. Yahya). It led to a series of operations which escalated the situation. One of these operations was at Nur Payo Khan (NPK) conducted on 1 March 2006. NPK compound was located approximately 800 meters east of village Dande Kili. The compound was being used for preparation of IEDs, small arms storage and communication training by militants. Two companies of SSG supported by aviation were tasked to clear the compound. At 7:04 am, five helicopters dropped SSG at the landing zone. The terrorists fired at the SSG. The force retaliated and killed a number of terrorists. At 10 am, Maj Gen Akram Sahi the GOC of local infantry division and GOC SSG Maj Gen Tahir, landed near the compound. From 10 to 10:50 am, the force was extricated by helicopters. A large quantity of arms and ammunition was recovered. Over 35 to 40 terrorists were killed while 25 to 30 were injured. In retaliation to this operation, camp at Miran Shah and landing strip came under rocket and small arms fire by the terrorists, from 12:05 to 2:30 pm the same day. Somehow the terrorists misread the army action and thought that they had forced the army to extricate.

On 4 March 2006, militants ambushed FC Commandant near Spinwam resulting in the death of 5 FC personnel and injuries to six others. In April, militants attacked an infantry battalion's post at Shatghalai Narai in Shawal valley (NWA) killing three soldiers. On 20 April, militants ambushed FC troops while they were moving from Tal picket towards Daraz Narai. Resultantly seven soldiers were killed and 26 were injured. On 24 April, militants ambushed commanding officer of an infantry battalion near Pai Khel on his way back from Maltika Sar. One soldier died and 16 were hospitalized. On 15 May militants ambushed FC route protection party resulting in death of one soldier.

By end 2006 Pakistan intelligence had picked up a lot of information about involvement of Indian consulates support to

terrorists fighting Pakistan army in FATA. India had supported Northern Alliance against Taliban government. Once Northern Alliance was imposed as Afghan rulers by USA, India exploited their special relations and got entrenched in Afghanistan. Apart from an embassy in Kabul, they opened four consulates, two of which were along Pakistani border i.e., at Jalalabad and Kandahar. "These offices, Islamabad said, were used by Indian intelligence agency Research and Analysis (RAW) to promote subversion and sabotage in the Balochistan province and Pakistan's tribal areas. Islamabad raised this matter again and again with President Karzai but with little effect. Kabul's insensitivity to Pakistan's security concerns was further illustrated by its decision to sign a Strategic Partnership Agreement with India in 2011."[9] Indian aims were to demoralize, destabilize Pakistani government, project it as a failing state and to embroil Pakistani army in areas away from Indian borders. They also wanted to use terrorist activities as a proof that nuclear weapons in Pakistan were not safe. To endear themselves to the Afghan government and the world at large, India provided a lot of financial aid to Afghanistan and slowly emerged as the second largest donor first being USA. However, the main aim of India in Afghanistan remained anti-Pakistan activities.

2007 proved to be a disastrous year in war against terror. The government of Gen Pervez Musharraf took a few decisions which considerably weakened it by the end of that year. On 9 March 07, the government made Chaudhry Iftikhar, the Chief Justice of Supreme Court, non-functional, which amounted to his dismissal. Resultantly the lawyers, judiciary, media and the civil society turned against the government. Country wide protests started.[10] Military action against the militants holed up in the Red mosque in Islamabad from 3 to 11 July 07, infuriated the religious right in the country. Militants declared end of all agreements with the government and decided no holds barred reaction. On 20 July 07, Supreme Court reinstated the deposed Chief Justice. It was making of the perfect storm. Majority of power brokers had turned against Gen Musharraf's rule. The common goal of removing

Musharraf unfortunately led to an unholy alliance of opposing forces which included Taliban as well. Fearing that Supreme Court now headed by Chaudhry Iftikhar may take some drastic action against his government, Gen Musharraf imposed emergency in the country and suspended the constitution on 3 November 07.[11]

In end November 07, Gen Musharraf took off his uniform, handing over the command of Pakistan army to Gen Ashfaq Pervez Kayani and becoming civilian President. On 27 December 07, Benazir Bhutto, the chairperson of Pakistan People's Party was assassinated in Rawalpindi in a terrorist attack. It proved to be the last proverbial nail in the already shattered coffin of the government in Pakistan. The year 2007 thus ended in almost chaos at the national level.

Army's war against terror took a turn for the worst in 2007 due to the weakening of the government. To handle the deteriorating situation, another infantry division was inducted in D.I Khan, Tank and Bannu to reinforce Peshawar Corps in July 2007.

A peace agreement had been signed between tribal elders and security forces in NWA in September 2006. It brought some peace to the agency. The situation remained calm till mid July 2007, when Taliban Shura annulled peace agreement as a reaction to Lal Masjid incident. Terrorist acts of rocket, mortar attacks, IED, suicidal attacks and ambush on military convoys intensified and the agency was again on fire. On 31 August 2007, ridges towards west and SW of Pash Ziarat (PZ) post were occupied by tribesmen, who demanded that army should vacate check posts around Razmak and Makeen area and that only FC troops could stay on those posts. On 8 September 2007, Quick Reaction Force (QRF) of an infantry battalion was fired upon short of the post. QRF fought back. They were extricated the next day. Militants managed to take away some communication equipment and a vehicle from the post. On night 9-10 September, militants managed to capture the post. It was felt necessary to reoccupy it. On 10 September 07, GOC along with his reconnaissance group reconnoitred PZ area

by helicopter. On 12 September 07, build-up of SSG and an infantry battalion started at Razmak. An infantry company secured landing zone (LZ) two kilometres NW of the post. Thirty SSG persons were dropped at LZ by 4:50 pm. The same day Razmak camp was targeted by militants with rockets. Therefore, helicopter base was shifted from Razmak to Miran Shah. SSG dropped at LZ started moving towards PZ, securing neighbouring heights and looking for an opportunity to reoccupy the post. Meanwhile further build up continued. On 13 September 07, additional 145 soldiers including 99 from SSG were dropped at LZ. At 6:20 pm, Khasadar post was occupied by an infantry battalion. Troops at PZ were subjected to heavy fire from all directions. At this stage information was received from Peshawar Corps that cease fire had been arranged with the militants and as a result troops came back. However, despite the ceasefire, situation continued to deteriorate. The terrorists felt that they had been successful in forcing army out of PZ and became confident of their capabilities. On 7 October 07, a FC convoy was ambushed approximately four kilometres north of Jhallar post. The convoy fired back and reached Mir Ali camp safely, leaving behind a damaged vehicle. An operation launched to retrieve the damaged vehicle, resulted in heavy casualties to the troops. An infantry brigade was tasked to link up with Jhallar check post and retrieve the damaged vehicle. Concentration of an infantry battalion was completed by 6 October 07. The troops moved from Mir Ali camp at 4:30 am, secured Mir Ali Chowk by 4:50 am and deployed a company south of Tochi River. The battalion commenced operations with a van guard company followed by second company. Van Guard Company successfully cleared area Shahbaz Khel– Mana Khel. When second company was moving through the gap between Shahbaz Khel and Mana Khel it drew heavy fire. Militants in large numbers were occupying the heights in the area. The battalion was ordered to clear the opposition. At 8:15 am, follow up company moved on vehicles to reinforce the second company. All these troops were encircled. The troops organized all round defence and engaged the militants. After suffering heavy losses, the infantry

battalion requested for extrication. Permission was granted by Brigade Commander at 9:10 am. Meanwhile at 10:30 am, approximately 100 militants attacked troops of another battalion south of Tochi River. Troops tried to withdraw but came under intense fire from build-up areas and could not disengage. About 12:30 pm, attack helicopters reached and helped the force to get out. At 3:45 pm, army troops and FC deployed at bridge on Tochi River disengaged, moved back to Mir Ali and reached there by 4:15 pm. During the operation 61 soldiers were killed and 45 injured.

Situation in Swat also started deteriorating in 2007 necessitating employment of army. Background to the problem was that till 1973, judicial system of Swat was based on FCR as in FATA. In 1974 FCR was abolished and replaced by regular law. The people were disappointed due to slow, expensive, complicated and at times corrupt dispensation of justice. Sufi Mohammed, a local of Swat, cashed on people's resentments and offered his version of Shariah as solution for speedy justice. Demand of Nizam-e-Shariah by Tahreek Nifaz Shariah Mohammedi (TNSM) under Sufi Muhammad gradually gained pubic support and turned violent in 1994. Consequently, an operation was launched in 1994 by FC. Provincial Government announced Nifaz-e-Shariah regulations and situation was stabilized. After 9/11, Sufi Muhammad mobilized a large number of people and took them to Afghanistan. After suffering many casualties, he abandoned his group and came back to Pakistan. He was arrested on return. TNSM was proscribed in 2002 due to its participation in terrorist acts. Gradually Sufi Muhammad was replaced by his son-in-law Mullah Fazalullah (MFU). Encouraged by support of some locals and Taliban, MFU gradually changed demand for 'Shariah' into 'Shariah or death'. He started violence against video, audio centres, barber shops, NGOs, female education, polio vaccination and government functionaries. He evicted police and civil administration, established own police stations and appointed own governors in areas held by him. Lal

Masjid incident was exploited by MFU to further weaken the writ of the Government. Consequently, most of Swat less Mingora became no go area for government officials. It was in these environments that an infantry division along with an independent armoured brigade moved to Swat in July 2007. However due to passive resistance by the provincial government of MMA, Swat was belatedly handed over to infantry division on 11 November 2007. Commencing operations on 27 November, most of Swat was secured by 9 February 08.

As a result of infantry division operations to clear Mingora, Khawzakhela, and Matta, the terrorists moved towards Shangla and Maidan (south of Kalam) and threatened Karakorum Highway (KKH). To clear these areas, another infantry division with two infantry brigades was employed to secure Shangla valley and remove threat to KKH. The force cleared Shangla District in November 2007 and Malam Jabba by end 2008.

2008 coming at the heels of disastrous 2007 didn't prove any better. It was the year of change and thus the confusion which always accompany change. In the general elections held in early 2008, People's Party won at the national level and in the province of Sind. Muslim League (N) won in Punjab and Awami National Party (ANP) in KPK. The new governments were sworn in April 2008. At the national level the new government initially remained too preoccupied to find its feet. Terrorist threat was relegated to the back seat giving space to Taliban. The new army leadership wanted to give full liberty to the new civilian government. The inaction and lack of antiterrorism policy by the new government was exploited by the Taliban. ANP government in KPK was initially somehow convinced that they could talk sense into Swat Taliban. They asked the army to step back and let them resolve the terrorism problem in Swat through negotiations. Their naive effort was interpreted by the Taliban as weakness. The result was even worse conditions for the army to handle at the end.

Momentum gained by the terrorist in 2007 continued into

2008. Better restructuring of Taliban in South and North Waziristan agencies in late 2007 had emboldened them under Bait Ullah Mahsud. There was immediate need to re-establish primacy of the government. An operation was therefore conducted in January 08, to isolate, weaken and bring to terms Mahsud militants, led by Bait Ullah Mahsud. Tiarza fort had been surrounded by the militants for three months and was on the verge of collapse. The Taliban had also started fire and ground raids against Ladha fort, thus putting Army in a difficult position. To restore the writ of the government, time synchronized, three-pronged offensive was planned by Peshawar Corps. The operation was preceded by economic blockade of the Mahsud tribe. Division at D I Khan was tasked to capture area up to Kot Kai astride Axis Jandola- Makeen with a brigade plus force. Peshawar Division was tasked to exert pressure from the north in area Razmak-Nawaz Kot to effectively seal routes leading from Makeen to Pash Ziarat-Mana complex and Makeen- Miran Shah via Razmak, and also to relieve pressure on Ladha fort. An infantry brigade reinforced with additional battalion undertook the operation.

Kohat Division launched offensive astride Shakkai-Tiarza axis to capture Ghut Ghundai feature and clear Tiarza valley from militants. Its infantry brigade captured Ghut Ghundai complex, linked up with Tiarza fort and cleared Tiarza pocket. The operation was completed by 31 January 08.

Dara Adam Khel (DAK) became volatile in January 08 when the militants violating an agreement took away five civilian trucks carrying army ammunition short of Kohat tunnel. On 25 January 08, the militants took control of the tunnel as well. They killed in cold blood 16 army troops looking after communications at the tunnel. To restore the writ of the government, an operation was launched on 25 January 08. An infantry brigade of Kohat Division was tasked to recapture tunnel ridge, open tunnel route and linkup with troops at Babuzai. Operation started at 5 pm on 26 January 08 and terminated successfully on 29 January 08. After the operation, control of the area was regained and life came to

normal. However, militant activities gained momentum after announcement of cease fire and de-induction of army to give the new provincial government of ANP a chance for dialogue in May 08. Failure of dialogue and increased terrorist activities necessitated military operation to secure DAK once again. Second operation was launched by Kohat Division to destroy militant bases and secure area between friendship tunnel and Spina Thana including adjacent valleys to ensure smooth traffic on Indus highway. The operation was successfully conducted from 23 September 08 to 13 October 08.

In southern FATA, Jandola was used as base of operations by the army during 2008. D I Khan Division was made responsible to ensure its security. After the operations, a lot of families migrated from tribal areas and settled in areas of Tank and D I Khan. Army was given responsibility to look after the IDPs at camp established at Kirriwarm (FR Tank).

Writ of the government was also challenged in July 08 in Hangu District. Doabba police station, army and FC positions at Samana, Gulistan fort and Torawari fort were surrounded by the militants. Kohat Division ordered an infantry brigade to secure the area. Operation commenced at 4 pm on 16 July 08 and terminated successfully on 23 July 08. Militants were flushed out from all the areas.

In 2008, writ of the government was lost in Bajour Agency and army had to be moved to a new front. Bajour was a vital staging area for Afghan freedom fighters during Afghan war in 1980s. The rise of TNSM in Swat in 1989 had its effects in neighbouring Bajour. After the US invasion of Afghanistan, Bajour was used by some Taliban groups. However, they kept a low profile. They mostly remained confined to suburbs of Bajour. Bajour came under spotlight after the US drone attack in village Damadola, Tehsil Mohmand in January 2006 in which reportedly many civilians were also killed. These attacks infuriated the locals. Militants moved from Tehsil Mohmand and due to presence of TNSM in the area

consolidated their hold on north and northeast of Bajour. They established a parallel executive and judicial system. In December 2007, the cadres of TNSM merged with TTP. Numerous groups with a total strength of approximately 12000 to 15000 militants started operating in the agency. Maulvi Faqir Mohammad became the commander of TTP. Having gained control of half of Bajour, Taliban started challenging writ of the Government. Lal Masjid incident in July 2007 in Islamabad further infuriated them. They started attacking law enforcing agencies (LEA), snatched weapons from levies, and beheaded many individuals on charges of spying. By June 2008, TTP controlled most of the agency and its roads. The political administration and Bajour Scouts were confined to the Political Agent colony and fort at Khar. Militants established a check post at Loesam. It is an important junction for move to Charmang and Nawagai and controls road Khar- Nawagai. It also controls the move to Mohmand Agency. On 6 August 2008, a company of Bajour Scouts was ordered to establish a check post at Loesam. By 3:30 pm, approximately 1000 Taliban encircled the company and ordered them to surrender. The company fought back with the support of artillery but being low on ammunition, water and ration were ordered to ex filtrate. To divert the attention of Taliban, a platoon size QRF was moved from Nawagai. This force was also encircled. On 7 August 2008, an infantry company was moved from Torghundai and an FC Wing from Landi Kotal to link-up with Loesam. At about 7:20 pm, when advancing troops reached Tagkhata / Khazana, they came under heavy fire and leading vehicles were engaged with rocket launchers. Exchange of fire continued for about 2 hours. The force retuned to Khar fort at about 11:45 pm. Another link-up effort was attempted on 8 August. This force was also ambushed by 500-600 terrorists near Tangkhata and the operation was abandoned. On 9 August, militants were engaged by combat aviation and air but the resistance continued. On night 18-19 August, militants attacked Nawagai Wing Headquarters inflicting heavy losses on Bajour scouts. 27 FC personnel were killed, 98 were injured and 34 went missing.

Due to deteriorating situation, 26 Brigade was inducted and tasked to relieve the embattled FC in Khar, open road Torghundai -Khar – Loesam -Nawagi, clear Bajour from the terrorists and establish writ of the State in the agency. The Brigade reached Torghundai fort on 5 September. On 6 September at 6 am, an infantry battalion commenced advance towards Khar. The troops moved through Tehsil Salarzai and Tehsil Uthmankhel, inhabited by pro-government tribes. Area up to Khar FC fort was secured by last light 8 September without resistance. On 9 September, second battalion started advancing towards Rashakai. Because of close country, advance was on a narrow front along a single axis. The battalion was tasked to clear Rashakai by last light. At the outskirts of the village, it met strong resistance. Next day, second battalion was ordered to assist first battalion near Rashakai. First battalion kept advancing cautiously. Second battalion bypassed Rashakai from the north through Charmang Khwar to link-up with first battalion short of Loesam. Both the battalions were unaware that they were moving into a trap. Terrorists had fortified 10 kilometres of road Khad Khar- Nawagai converting the build-up areas into strong points. After suffering many casualties, the two battalions were forced to withdraw to area short of Rashakai. Thereafter the Brigade Commander ordered the third battalion to establish link-up with the trapped battalions on 11 September. First two battalions were tasked to move back and open the road. Third battalion came under intense fire just a few hundred meters from its start point. Resultantly, the battalion could not make any headway. Brigade Headquarters less an infantry battalion, along with the Brigade Commander were now surrounded. Taliban commander, Maulvi Faqir offered Brigade Commander to surrender for safe passage. The offer was rejected. On 12 September, one platoon with a troop of tanks was tasked to open rearward link. The platoon was ambushed near Dhillai and a tank was destroyed. Brigade QRF was immediately dispatched to rescue the platoon. As the QRF approached the ambush site, it was engaged with rocket launchers and small arms. On 13 September, the militants kept the two infantry battalions under fire. The

brigade kept advancing towards Dhilai Bridge, clearing compound after compound. The advance kept raising the morale of troop. It was essential to clear the blockade as soon as possible. An infantry battalion less two companies, operating in Swat was moved from Torghundai to approach Rashakai from the south and link-up with the encircled troops. It occupied the compounds on northern side of the road about 100 meters ahead of Tangkhata under the cover of tanks and combat aviation. On 22 September one company of this battalion came under intense fire near village Khazana and had to retreat. Ten soldiers were killed and 31 injured including six officers. The brigade commander asked for reinforcements. An infantry battalion from D I Khan Division was moved from Bannu. The battalion launched a well-planned attack on 27 September. Cobra helicopters and nine tanks were employed in close support. After heavy fighting, the unit cleared the area. From 19 to 28 October, brigade consolidated its position. One battalion was deployed from Ghee Mill to Tangkhata, second from Khazana to Dhillai and the third from exclusive Dhillai to Rashakai. The battalion from Bannu cleared Loesam by attacking from multiple directions and by 23 October secured the area up to Sabagai top. After clearing Loesam it was de-inducted to Bannu. Capture of Loesam was a major setback for the militants. Brigade decided to clear area up to Nawagai. One infantry battalion along with a troop of tanks was tasked to undertake this operation. The operation commenced on 12 November. Sabagai Top was cleared on 17 November, Bhagori village by 27 November and Zorbandar on 30 November. Link-up was established on 2 December 2008. The other two battalions kept holding their positions between Tankhata and Loesam along axis Khar-Zobandar. The brigade remained employed in the agency till 12 June 2009 and conducted many operations to clear the area of militants and brought peace to the Agency.

Swat remained relatively out of news in 2008. In early 2008, a peace agreement with militants was signed by the newly elected provincial government of ANP. It gave a breather to the militants.

They regrouped, reorganized and became more dangerous. In July 2008, two brigades from Gujranwala were inducted and the division was once again made responsible for peace in Swat. On 28 December 2008, Kharian Division was de inducted and Gujranwala Division took over the responsibility.

"While Pakistan army was preoccupied with efforts to contain the terrorists, Washington pressed it to 'do more' against the Afghan insurgents. As priorities clashed, US officials began accusing Islamabad of playing a 'double game.' Defence Secretary Roberts Gates said Pakistan was 'really no ally at all.'[12]

"The terrorists attack in Mumbai on 26 November 2008, in which more than one hundred and sixty persons were killed, precipitated alarming tension as India accused Pakistan of complicity with Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT)."[13] Pakistan not only condemned the terrorist attack but vehemently denied of any involvement. India however threatened Pakistan of military action and moved bulk of its armed forces to Pakistani borders. At a state lunch in Lahore on 7 December, US Senator John McCain relayed a message from Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to several of Pakistan's dignitaries, including Pakistan's Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani that if Pakistan did not arrest those involved with the attacks, India would begin aerial attacks against Pakistan.[14] On 19 December 2008, Global intelligence service 'Stratfor' said, "Indian military operations against targets in Pakistan have in fact been prepared and await the signal to go forward." It added, "These most likely would take the form of unilateral precision strikes inside Pakistan-administered Kashmir, along with special forces action on the ground in Pakistan proper."[15] Indian threat was real and menacing. Pakistan despite being heavily engaged in fighting the terrorists on its western borders had to move its army to eastern borders to thwart any mischief by India.[16] India army deployment against Pakistan once again gave breathing space to Pakistani Taliban by forcing Pakistan army to curtail operations against them. Pakistan army remained deployed on eastern borders against threateningly

poised Indian army for almost six months. As far as LeT was concerned, "Pakistani authorities detained prominent office bearers of Jamat-ud-Dawa, successor of the banned LeT, and asked India for more details to facilitate prosecution. The information India provided was found inadmissible by the Lahore High Court. In the absence of necessary cooperation between the legal authorities of the two countries, prosecution proved frustrating."[17]

The standoff between India and Pakistan after Mumbai attacks once again strengthened the belief of Pakistani policy makers that India was at the look out to exploit any actual or fabricated incident to destroy Pakistan. It was Pakistani Armed Forces specially the nuclear Forces which stood between Indian mischievous designs and sovereignty of Pakistan. Indian inability to initiate any action was another proof of non-viability of Indian 'Cold Start/ Proactive' doctrine. Unfortunately, India has continued following this doctrine to this date. This doctrine is only destabilizing peace in the region and selling wrong ideas to Indian Government and public.

2009 witnessed the peak of Taliban power in Pakistan. The threat generated helped open the eyes of the government and the nation to the menace of Taliban. Army employed the lessons it had learned in 2008 in Bajour, to defeat Taliban in Swat and SWA, thus finally turning the tide of terrorism.

Due to almost seven years of operations against terrorists and resultant hardships, the population of FATA became critical of the Government by 2009. India and other players took advantage of the situation and Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) emerged with anti-Pakistan agenda. Increased terrorists' activities challenged writ of the Government once again in FATA and Swat with renewed vigour. The lines of communication of Peshawar and Kohat Divisions operating in NWA and SWA were seriously threatened due to TTP activities. Taliban established their courts in Tank. Bannu appeared to be the next objective of the terrorists.

In Swat, operations of Kharian Division and Shangla Task Force had been stopped in 2008 before their logical culmination by a peace agreement between the government and the retreating Taliban. Taliban exploited the olive branch to re-emerge. They reversed the achievements of previous military operation. Emboldened by weakness of the government, Taliban started expanding area under their control in complete violation of the agreement. Their move into Buner unnerved even international community. International media started announcing distance left between advancing Taliban and Islamabad. Pakistan People's Party and ANP (In KPK) governments belatedly woke up to the emerging threat and ordered the Army to defeat Taliban and restore its writ in Swat.

Operation Rah-e-Rast was therefore launched in Swat in 2009. Gujranwala Division had taken over from Kharian Division in December 2008. One infantry brigade was moved to Mingora. Mangla Division was moved to Swat to form part of Operation Rah-e-Rast on 28 April 2009. Mangla Division with one integral brigade and one independent infantry brigade moved to Khawazakhela in May 2009. Area of operation was demarcated; one brigade of Gujranwala division and Shangla Task Force were placed under Gujranwala Division. Operation was under taken by two infantry divisions, FC and a battalion of SSG. Army planned to envelop Swat from all its three entrances i.e., Malakand, Buner and Shangla simultaneously inserting SSG from the air in the terrorist heartland of Piochar valley. Mangla Division was tasked to operate along Besham- Shangla – Khwazakhela- Piochar linking with SSG at Piochar. Later, clear area up to Kalam and Shangla Districts. Mangla Division was inducted from the direction of Malakand to clear main supply route northwards and in the process clear Mingora and area up to Kabbal – Charbagh. One infantry brigade was to operate as auxiliary force from Chakdara / Dir towards Kabbal / Kanju. FC was to operate in Buner. The operation started on May 09. One SSG battalion was heli landed at Piochar which was the hub of militants. It operated

against Taliban from 12 May 09 to 20 June 09.

Attacked from three directions on ground and in the rear by SSG, Taliban could not concentrate on any front. Multidirectional attack put the Taliban on the horns of dilemma. The two divisions, FC and SSG kept a steady pace of advance despite strong resistance by the Taliban. As the noose started tightening around Taliban their resistance weakened considerably. With total defeat staring them in the face, the Taliban ran away leaving Swat to the army. The operation was a complete success and army managed to re-establish writ of the government. Artillery and air played an important role in making the operation a big success. Most of the terrorist infrastructure was destroyed. The success of the operation in Swat had a lasting effect on future anti-terrorism operations in Pakistan.

In South Waziristan, Siplatoi fort had been surrounded by terrorists since mid-March 2009. Supply route from Jandola to Tanai was also blocked by Taliban. Kohat Division tasked one infantry brigade to relieve Siplatoi fort. The operation commenced on 19 June and terminated on 21 June.

Jani Khel had turned into a hub of Taliban from SWA, Lakki Marwat and NWA near Bannu and surrounding areas. A brigade of D I Khan division was tasked to secure Jani Khel. Operation terminated successfully on 17 July 09. To eliminate Taliban's hideouts in difficult area of Tajmahal and Mir Wali of FR Kohat, an operation was launched by Kohat Division on 11 August. The operation commenced on 11 August 09 and successfully secured the area by 13 August 09.

Cashing on the success in Swat, an operation was planned in SWA. In FATA, SWA Agency was most strongly held by TTP. It was also the Headquarters of TTP. All terrorist activities in Pakistan were being planned and controlled from SWA. It was realized that defeat of Taliban in SWA would considerably weaken Taliban in FATA. As a prelude to army operation, all entrances to SWA were blocked. D I Khan Division was inducted

in Jandola sector on 18 May 09, to make the blockade more effective. It was planned to target Taliban bases with artillery, attack helicopters and air before ground offensive. Three-pronged ground offensive to destroy Taliban in the Agency was planned. Kohat Division launched operation on 16 October 09 from the Shakkai valley and Wana towards Tiarza and Sherwangi. D I Khan Division launched an operation on 16 October 09 from Jandola towards Spinkai, Raghzai and Kotkai. Peshawar Division commenced operation on 20 October 09 from Razmak in NWA towards Makeen. The operation was supported by FC and 500 SSG troops. As the operation in SWA was nearing completion, another operation was launched in November 2009 to clear Lakki Ghund from Taliban. The operation was launched by one infantry brigade. It was successfully conducted from 20 to 24 November 2009.

On the foreign front, "in 2009, prominent US senators Kerry, Lugar and Barman sponsored the Enhanced Partnership with Pakistan Act which more than doubled grant aid from $ 600 million a year to $ 1.5 billion a year for the next five years. At a meeting held in Tokyo in April 2009, twenty Friends of Democratic Pakistan including the USA, Japan, Britain, Germany, China, Saudi Arabia and other affluent Arab countries, Turkey and Iran pledged $ 5.7 billion in aid for Pakistan."[18]

In 2009, the PPP government appointed ex Foreign Secretary Riaz Mohammad Khan to resume back channel talks with India. These talks had been initiated by General Pervez Musharraf and reportedly had made progress. Discussions with Indian counterpart were held but no agreement was reached.[19] It seemed that India was interested in talks only for the sake of optics and not for results. So long India does not take Pakistan as equal and insists on imposing its agenda there would be no peace in the region.

Having defeated Taliban in Swat and SWA, the army spent 2010 to consolidate gains of 2009. There was no major operation

comparable to the Swat and SWA operations in 2010. Many comparatively small operations were however conducted during the year. The government and army remained busy deciphering the emerging policies of the new Obama administration in USA. The contradiction in giving a date to finally pull out of Afghanistan and yet opting for a short-term troops surge was self-defeating and therefore quite intriguing.[20] US troops in Afghanistan had been varying but slowly increasing. In 2003 there were 13,100 US troops. From 2004-06, these were increased to 20,000. In 2007 these was further increased to 25,000. In his last year in office, President Bush raised the strength to 48,500. President Obama's strategy was to defeat Taliban through an initial surge in troops and then pull out of Afghanistan. Under this strategy US troops were increased to 100,000 by December 2009. Linked with troops surge in Afghanistan was US increased pressure on Pakistan to eliminate the so-called safe heavens in its territory. Pakistan denied existence of any safe heavens. What to talk of any safe heavens Pakistan had been in a constant state of war against terrorists since 2002. Pakistan's economy, people and the army had suffered a lot in this war but their resolve had not wavered. Somehow, instead of appreciating the sacrifices made by Pakistan, USA kept on blaming Pakistan for its own failures in Afghanistan.

The first operation in 2010 was launched in Orakzai agency. In 2010 there was hardly any presence of security forces in Orakzai agency. TTP took advantage of the security vacuum and established their control in the Agency. The Agency gradually saw influx of terrorists from adjoining areas of Khyber, Dara Adam Khel and SWA. Terrorists in Orakzai were not only negatively impacting security situation in Peshawar and adjoining areas, but more importantly, Orakzai agency was being used as a passage to three agencies in the north and three in the south. In October 2009 all entry and exit routes from Khyber and Kurram side were effectively blocked followed by engagement of known terrorist camps from the air. It shaped the environment for decisive

operation in Orakzai agency in 2010. The operation commenced on 23 March 10 under FC KPK with an infantry brigade under command. The operation was successful in flushing out terrorist from their hideouts and brought peace in the area. On night 30-31 March 10, approximately 250 to 300 Taliban attacked a gun position of a medium artillery regiment. The physical assault was coupled with a suicide vehicle attempting to penetrate the camp. The suicide vehicle blasted outside the main entrance. The attempt was foiled by the gunners. The attack lasted for four hours.

To address the vulnerability of Indus Highway and road Kohat-Rawalpindi, an infantry brigade was ordered to clear general area Bora and secure northern heights of Pastawana. One infantry company and 50 individuals of Azadi Amman lashkar comprising locals moved from Spina Thana on 18 September 10. One group of Army scaled the mountains from eastern direction on 19 September 10 and neutralized the terrorists. 76 militants were killed, others left their weapons and ammunition and ran away.

After establishment of peace in Swat in 2009, the process for reconstruction and rehabilitation of the displaced persons started in 2010. In August 2010, Swat valley was hit by a devastating flood. Gujranwala Division was employed to rescue the affected people. In 2011, Gujranwala Division handed over Swat to Mangla Division and went back to its peace location.

2011 proved to be another year of turmoil for Pakistan. It saw Pakistan - US relations at their worst. The first incident was the murder of two Pakistani young men in Lahore by a CIA security contractor, Raymond Davis. US embassy claimed that he had diplomatic immunity. Pakistani foreign office had not placed him on such a list and refused to treat him as a diplomat. Finally, US paid $ 2.4 million as blood money to the heirs of the victims under Diyet law for the release of Raymond Davis. The second incident was US helicopter raid at Abbottabad to kill Osama Bin Laden.[21] There was strong reaction in Pakistan on violation of Pakistan's sovereignty. Armed Forces ability to defend Pakistan's strategic

interests specially its nuclear assets against US attacks was discussed in the Parliament and media. The raid was a huge embarrassment for the army and the government. The situation turned ugly on 26 November when a US air strike killed 24 Pakistan army troops at Salazar post near the Afghan border. Pakistan was shocked at the deadly attack and further outraged by US attempts to attribute it to errors by both the sides. In response Pakistan got the Shamsi air base in Baluchistan vacated from the US, suspended transit facilities for supplies for US and NATO in Afghanistan and downgraded intelligence cooperation with US. Later Pakistan boycotted the Bonn conference on Afghanistan.[22] Washington miscalculated pressure it could exert on Pakistan due to its financial aid and Pakistan overestimated the leverage of supply route through Pakistan.[23] It took seven months for the tempers to cool down in both the countries; and that would be in 2012. The events of 2011 as enumerated above kept Pakistan army under stress on the domestic front. Due to above reasons, there was no major operation by army in FATA in 2011. In Afghanistan, over 100,000 US troops in 2010-11, kept Taliban under pressure and at bay.

Indus Highway had once again become insecure in Darra Adam Khel (DAK) due to Taliban activities. To eliminate their hideouts around DAK, extending existing security perimeter and ensure smooth flow of traffic on Indus Highway after IED blast in the Kohat tunnel, an infantry brigade was tasked to clear area east and west of road Kohat - Peshawar (Indus Highway) in DAK. The operation was conducted from 3 to 10 February 2011. Search operation of Bora and clearance of village Pakhi was completed. The area was secured and troops moved back on 10 February 11.

During operations in Swat in 2009, Peshawar Division had launched an operation on axis Razmak - Makeen (terrorist nerve centre). After the success of operation, it was necessary to hold the cleared axis and Pash Ziarat. However, due to vastness of area and inter division gaps, Shaktu valley and Wucha Darra were not permanently occupied. Due to absence of security forces, the

terrorists moved to Shaktu valley in the next 18 months. By 2011, small groups of terrorists located in the area started conducting terrorist acts against LEAs frequently. They maintained themselves logistically through adjoining areas of NWA. Terrorists attack on Marobi post on night 8-9 June warranted immediate action. An operation was planned from 13 to 16 July 2011 to secure Shaktu valley with focus to inflict maximum casualties and destruction of Taliban in the area. Peshawar, Kohat and D I Khan Divisions participated under the operational control of Peshawar Corps. The operation was launched simultaneously from multi directions with link up at selected locations. The multi directional move and employment during bad weather and poor visibility resulted in success. Peshawar Division cleared Larima, Zadrana and Pamana by 14 July 11 and linked up with Kohat and D I Khan Divisions by 15 July. Kohat Division cleared Tangi Imar Khel by 14 July 11 and linked up with Peshawar Division and later cleared Darakai and Tatkai by 16 July 11. D I Khan Division cleared Barora Narai, Zange Sar, Mena Khel Mela and Hishpa Garh by 14 July 11. Tangi and Tabi Gleshi were cleared by 15 July 11.

In 2011, Taliban once again gained strength in Mohmand agency. FC conducted an operation in February 2011. The operation was a partial success, necessitating employment of army to clear the entire agency. Mohmand, Bajour and Dir were the main routes to Swat valley. Plans to reduce army in Swat required Mohmand to be cleared. Terrorists had increased attacks on peace committees, political administration and local leaders. Preliminary operations were launched to clear upper Dir where terrorists were operating from across the border and threatening Chitral and Swat. Operation in Mohmand was launched in April 2011 by an infantry brigade. It lasted for seven months. After strenuous fighting the area was cleared by November 11.

In 2012, relations between Pakistan and USA slowly moved back to somewhat normal level. It being the last year of Pakistan People's Party in power, the government was averse to any risk

before the coming elections. Pakistan army therefore just consolidated gains of the previous years. There were some operations during 2012 to ensure that initiative remained with the army.

Shaktu valley on the boundary of NWA and SWA was once again being used as transit area by the Taliban to conduct terrorist acts against government forces. Due to absence of army in the valley, Taliban were using it as a base. It was planned to secure Shaktu valley and inflict maximum casualties on Taliban. Operation commenced on 25 April 12 and terminated on 26 April 12. The operation was a joint effort of a brigade each of Peshawar, Kohat and D I Khan Divisions on three prongs. Troops were de-inducted by 26 April 12.

The terrorists conducted rocket attacks at Dargai Sar (SWA) on 29 September 12 and fire raid at Pt 1337 on 13 October 12. Terrorist activities in Stara Mela and surroundings increased considerably. Therefore, an operation was conducted from 18 to 23 October 2012 to secure these areas by three infantry battalions.

On 9 October 2012, an assassination attempt was made on a 15 years old girl named Malala Yousafzai in Swat valley by a terrorist belonging to TTP.[24] She was shot in the head. She was shifted in a military helicopter to Peshawar and then to Rawalpindi. After stabilisation she was moved to UK for advanced medical treatment. After regaining her health, she became an activist, championing girls right to education the world over. She was awarded Nobel Peace Prize for 2014 for her untiring services for the cause of girl's education despite extreme hurdles.

In November 2012, Kharian Division replaced Mangla Division in Swat. In 2012 USA reduced its troops in Afghanistan from 100,000 to 77,000 without defeating Afghan Taliban.

2013 was the year of change. Pakistan People's Party lost in the general elections and managed to form coalition government in the province of Sind only. ANP lost KPK to Pakistan Tahreek-

e-Insaf (PTI). Pakistan Muslim League Nawaz (PML, N) while retaining the province of Punjab captured the Federal government as well. PML (N) and PTI both were inclined to resolve terrorism problem with negotiations. They had not learned from the experience of ANP. The mistakes of 2008 were repeated once again in 2013 with similar results. The main operation in 2013 started in the Khyber agency before the new government took over.

Despite many minor operations in Khyber agency in the last few years, the Agency remained a strong hold of terrorists. These terrorists were a constant threat for Peshawar city and strategically important Indus Highway. Of special concern were Maidan and Tirah valleys of Khyber agency. Southern part of Maidan valley joins with upper Orakzai agency and the western part with Kurram agency. After successful conduct of operations in Kurram and Orakzai agencies in 2012, most of the terrorists had re-located to Kuki Khel area and ousted pro-government tribes by August 12. By January 13, they moved into Para Chamkani area (Kurram agency). TTP then exploited the local conflict between Laskhar-e-Islam (LI) and Ansar-ul-Islam (AUI) inside Maidan and with the support of local criminal elements and LI, removed AUI from the area, capturing Maidan by 25 March 13. Maidan became a core area from where TTP started its activities in Khyber, Kurram and Orakzai agencies. Due to the new emerging threat, it was decided to evict Taliban from Maidan and ensure return of displaced persons.

By 2013, almost all reserve divisions of the army had been employed in FATA operations. Many artillery units and a few headquarters divisional artilleries had also been successfully employed in infantry role. It was therefore decided to employ Headquarters Artillery Division with infantry brigades under command for operation in Khyber agency in 2013. The Gujranwala Artillery Division was given three infantry brigades under its command. The Division was tasked to secure Maidan and Tirah Valleys. The division arrived in the area on 5 May 2013. The operation commenced on 31 May 2013. It was designed to

make incremental spatial gains to induce terrorists to attack army's prepared defences and inflict maximum casualties on them. Thereafter launch multiple diversionary attacks and deception measures to draw them away from main point of application while gaining control of important heights through silent attacks. The operation was launched on two axes with one brigade along Haider Kandao and Drestani axis, and second brigade on Ahranga – Bagh – Naya Bagh axis. FC conducted nibbling operations on forward ridges of Bagh valley. First brigade cleared western portion of Maidan valley and linked up with second brigade. The second brigade cleared eastern portion of Maidan valley. Successful clearance of Maidan valley resulted in terrorist retreating to adjacent heights, north and northeast of Rajgal Nullah, Dwa Toi and Wucha Wana. It was therefore decided to occupy Angori Sar to dominate track Wucha Wana – Dwa Toi. It was done successfully. Point 2070 dominated Dwa Toi and Takhtah feature. In early September 13, it was decided to capture point 2070 to dominate terrorist positions in the area. The task was accomplished successfully. After the successful conduct of operations, the Artillery Division was tasked for rehabilitation of Tirah valley. One infantry brigade was tasked to undertake the project. The Division managed second largest return of displaced persons after Swat in a record time of 3 months. At the culmination of the operation, Chief of Army Staff Gen Ashfaq Pervaiz Kayani visited Headquarters Artillery Division and appreciated the offensive, terming it as text book infantry operation. The Artillery Division was de-inducted on 26 December 2013.

Barwand bowl (SWA) is a large area of approximately 229 square kilometres in the northeast of SWA. The terrain is difficult, hilly with narrow valleys, having scattered villages and little infrastructure. Due to lack of troops in the bowl, it became a sanctuary for terrorists. It also provided a corridor for north-south and east-west move across divisional boundary. Road Shakkai – Makeen became vulnerable and more posts were established to

make it safe. It became necessary to secure Barwand bowl. Operation was conducted from 11 October to 3 November 13. The operation aimed at flushing Barwand bowl from the terrorists. A preliminary operation to seal identified gaps by Kohat and D I Khan Divisions was done. A large number of villages were searched and cleared. As a result of operation, terrorists were denied freedom of action in Barwand bowl, their routes from NWA to SWA disrupted and sanctuary denied.

In end November 2013 General Kayani handed over the command of Pakistani army after a long inning of six years to General Raheel Shareef.

Despite great sacrifices by Pakistan army, the menace of terrorism though contained and put-on strategic defensive was not yet eliminated by 2013. Main reason for survival of terrorists for so long was lack of political policy and understanding the issue at the national level. Even till end 2013 there was confusion whether to fight or talk. Taliban always agreed to negotiations as it gave them respite, time to regroup and rearm. Negotiations were always used by Taliban to create more confusion about their real aims. Army suffered heavy losses clearing certain areas repeatedly. While army was always successful in securing target areas, civil administration always failed to hold and rebuild security apparatus which could deny those areas to returning Taliban. Army was neither designed nor trained to perform the job of civil administration.

By 2014 US 'Pivot to the Pacific' was having negative effects for Pakistan. After 9/11, US attention had been in the Middle East. When Chinese economy grew phenomenally and became the third and then second largest in the world, US was alarmed. China was viewed as a rising rival and future threat. US felt that rivals of China like India and Japan were best suited allies in her future struggle with China. Hence after US strategic interests coincided more with India than Pakistan. India was most suited to be propped up against China. Indians also were eager to facilitate

USA in this struggle against China. American tilt towards India was at a cost to its relations with Pakistan. President Obama spoke of ties with India as 'the defining partnership of 21 century.' Therefore, Modi's remark that the problem of terrorism was 'incubated in India's neighbourhood' fell on receptive ears in US Congress. Defence Secretary Ashton Carter met his Indian counterpart four times in 2015. Bilateral trade reached $ 107 billion in 2015. USA sold military equipment worth $ 14 billion to India. Goodwill towards Pakistan declined across the USA. US senate blocked $400 million subsidy for the sale of eight F16 aircraft to Pakistan. Strategic stability in the Subcontinent was being eroded due to USA getting too close to India.[25]

In Afghanistan, the 2014 Presidential elections were marred by charges of fraud. Dr Ashraf Ghani had emerged with more votes than Dr Abdullah. The results were challenged and there was fear of division of the country on ethnic lines. With threats and pressure, USA managed a compromise solution on 21 September 2014, according to which Dr Ashraf Ghani was declared as President and Dr Abdullah as Chief Executive. They took oath of office on 29 September. Appointment of ministers requiring concurrence of both and approval of the parliament took months.[26] While an imminent problem was resolved, it resulted in a perpetually paralyzed government, which found it easy to blame Pakistan for its failures. By end 2014, USA had pulled out bulk of its forces from Afghanistan, leaving behind only 9800 troops.[27]

In May 2014, BJP led by Narendra Modi won landslide victory in India. It was making of a perfect storm for Pakistan. Modi invited SAARC head of states to attend his oath taking ceremony. Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif accepted the invitation. This goodwill was however responded by new Indian foreign minister Sushma Swaraj by saying that, "talks can be effective and successful only if terrorist activities stop." The new BJP government was packed with ultra-nationalists committed to Hindu extremist vision of RSS. Modi's first act was to cancel the scheduled meeting between foreign secretaries in August 2014.

Soon there were massive firing violations of Line of Control in Kashmir and working boundary. Modi ordered BSF to act 'fiercely' and showed satisfaction on BSF claims of heavy casualties inflicted on Pakistanis. Indian Defence minister Manohar Parrikar said that, "what is the harm in using terrorists against terrorists."[28] On 30 May 2014 Modi appointed Mr. Doval as his National Security Advisor (NSA). He was an ex-police officer and had spent most of his life as an intelligence operator. He had spent six years as under cover intelligence officer in Indian High Commission in Islamabad, Pakistan. He had retired as Director Intelligence Bureau. Upon his appointment as NSA, Doval proclaimed his now well known 'Doval Doctrine.' The doctrine is marked by three themes - Irrelevance of morality, of extremism freed from calculation or calibration and reliance on military. He openly declared to use terrorism as policy against Pakistan. His threats of use of terrorism and boasts were widely reported in Indian media. Two of his famous threats to Pakistan are, first, "You may do one Mumbai; you may lose Baluchistan." Second was, "either Pakistan give up terrorism against India or India would let it "bleed with the Taliban".[29] While Pakistan had been complaining since long about Indian support to TTP and Baloch terrorists, the world kept quiet. TTP terrorist activities, supported by Indian RAW and Afghan Tajik dominated NDS, resulted in heavy civilian casualties in Pakistan. The world instead of reigning in Indian state policy of supporting terrorism kept on telling Pakistan to do more. It was strange that despite Indian NSA openly admitted of using TTP and Baloch terrorists against Pakistan, UNO or the West did not admonish India. Pakistan and its army were rightly losing faith in the impartiality of the so-called free world.

In Pakistan, the army wanted to continue operations against the militants' operating in North Waziristan in 2014 so as not to lose momentum it had gained. However, the new governments of PML (N) and PTI somehow believed that Taliban could be convinced through talks about peaceful struggle for their demands. Military

operation was put on the backburner due to the peace talks between PML (N) government and the militants. Peace talks started on 26 March 2014 between the government and some religious scholars nominated by Taliban as their representatives. The government wanted the talks to be within the parameters of the Constitution of Pakistan, whereas TTP demanded immediate implementation of Sharia. While the army was exercising maximum restraint due to the peace talks, on 8 June 2014, ten militants belonging to TTP and IMU attacked Jinnah International Airport. 28 persons including security personnel were killed, 18 were wounded and there was a lot of damage to aircrafts and equipment. As a consequence, public opinion turned against the peace talks. Under immense public pressure, the government took decision to attack the base of TTP i.e., North Waziristan Agency. On 15 June 2014, armed forces of Pakistan launched operation "Zarb-e-Azb" against foreign and local terrorists in North Waziristan Agency. The targeted groups included Tehrik-i-Taliban Pakistan (TTP), Al-Qaeda, the East Turkestan Islamic Movement (ETIM), the Islamic Movement of Uzbekistan (IMU) and the Haqqani network. It was a multi-phase operation. In the first phase, starting from 15 June 14, Peshawar division having four infantry brigades consisting of thirteen infantry battalions cordoned off the 'Core Areas' of Mir Ali, Miranshah, Boya, Degan and Datta Khel. Its purpose was to strangulate the terrorists physically and logistically by cutting them off from the surrounding areas. While executing first phase, phase two i.e., evacuation of civilian population was carried out from 17 to 23 June. A total of 676,614 civilians left the combat zone. The purpose of this phase was that there should be no civilian casualties. The third phase of the operation which had actually continued with the first two phases was employment of air force against militant training facilities, hideouts, and other infrastructure. Hideouts in Degan-Boya and Datta Khel were targeted by jet aircraft, since foreign and local insurgents linked to the Karachi airport attack were reportedly located there. As many as 140 militants (mostly Uzbek) were killed in the strikes,

including commander and airport attack mastermind Abu Abdur Rehman Almani. After evacuation of the civilians the air campaign was intensified till 30 June. The fourth phase was ground offensive for the clearance of the 'Core Areas'. This phase lasted from 30 June to 20 August. This was the most critical phase where each and every terrorist had to be searched and killed and every inch cleared of militants. During the thick of the operations, on 7 July, General Raheel Sharif visited North Waziristan. He was received by Lieutenant General Khalid Rabbani, the Peshawar Corps Commander. Despite heavy odds Pakistan army cleared the 'Core Areas' with in stipulated time. Fifth phase started on 21 August for clearance of the peripheral areas i.e., ground clearance of rest of the North Waziristan Agency. This phase was completed by 3 October 2014. In this operation 1553 Taliban terrorists were killed. Arms and ammunition worth Rupees 14.3 billion were recovered from NWA. Approximately 6500 Taliban ran away to Afghanistan despite repeated requests by Pakistan to seal the border opposite NWA. These Taliban later found safe heavens in Afghanistan and under the supervision of Afghan and Indian intelligence (NDS and RAW) started operating against targets in interior Pakistan. The operation resulted in over 65% decrease in terrorist incidents in Pakistan. On 8 December 2014, phased repatriation of the IDPs was approved. On 31 March 2015, the repatriation started and was soon completed. In 2014 after successful completion of operation Zarb e Azb, a brigade sized operation was launched in Khyber Agency. Operation Khyber 1 was successfully executed from October to December. It was aimed at clearing areas adjacent to Darra Adam Khel, Peshawar and Barra so as to reduce terrorist activities in the city of Peshawar.

On 16 December 14, one of the most heinous terrorist attacks in Pakistan's history took place. Six TTP affiliated terrorists (three Arabs, two Afghan and one Chechen) entered a school in Peshawar and started indiscriminate killings. 149 persons including 132 young children were killed. All six terrorists were

killed by army response team. The plan was hatched and controlled from Afghanistan by the terrorists who had run away during operation Zarb e Azb. It was 9/11 for Pakistan. There was massive out pouring of sympathy and anger at international and national level. The Prime Minister of Pakistan addressed the nation on 24 December and announced twenty-point National Action Plan (NAP). Under this plan moratorium on death penalty was lifted facilitating execution of the terrorists. Military courts were established under 21 Constitutional amendment to try hard core civilian terrorists. NAP was a full spectrum response to terrorism in Pakistan.

In 2015 there was some improvement in Pakistan US relations. Washington expressed confidence in the security measures taken by Pakistan for its nuclear assets and White House complimented Pakistan on 29 August 2015 for taking its responsibility seriously.[30] In Afghanistan Taliban launched deadly attacks in July and August 2015. Hundreds of people and troops were killed in Kabul and Kunduz. President Ashraf Ghani blamed Pakistan despite the fact that in 2014 Pakistan had destroyed all terrorist networks in NWA in operation Zarb e Azb. Pakistan condemned all terrorist attacks by Taliban in Afghanistan.[31] In November 2015 Afghan President visited Pakistan for talks to end terrorism. He said that, 'alone we can survive but together we can thrive.' However, the dream remained unrealized.[32] Trust deficit between the two countries was too wide to be bridged by a few visits and idealistic talk. In 2015 in India, first year of BJP government saw the unbridled rise of Hindu extremism in the guise of Hindutva. The Chief Minister of Haryana openly warned Muslims to stop eating beef or leave India. There were multiple Hindu mob attacks and lynching of innocent Indian Muslim citizens. Hindu extremists forced cancellation of all musical concerts in India by Pakistani artists. However, by end 2015, BJP government started feeling the heat of their extremist policies at home and tried to review their 'no talks' stance towards Pakistan. On 1 December the Prime ministers of the two countries met in Paris on the side-

lines of UN climate summit. On 9 December Indian Foreign Minister Sushma Swaraj came to Islamabad to attend heart of Asia conference. Relations seemed to further improve when Modi had a surprise stopover at Lahore to meet Pakistani Prime Minister Mr. Nawaz Sharif on 25 December 2015.

In Pakistan the army kept its anti-terrorist momentum by carrying out massive 'intelligence-based operations' (IBOs) throughout the country. The tempo of IBOs increased from 460 operations in the first quarter to 3188 operations in the last quarter of 2015. The IBOs were against the terrorists, their financers, facilitators and supporters. In 2015 only one major military operation was launched in FATA in Khyber agency. In operation Khyber 2, launched from March to May 2015, whole of Khyber Agency less Tirah and Rajgal areas was cleared by the troops.

2016 started with a negative note as on 2 January militants attacked Pathankot Indian air base. India immediately blamed that Jaish e Mohammed (JeM) based in Pakistan was involved in the attack. Pakistan police raided and sealed the offices of the banned JeM. The government also announced that 'Pakistan territory will not be used against any country.' Pakistan extended full cooperation in investigation. A tip-off by the Pakistani national security chief to his Indian counterpart facilitated interception of terrorists in March 2016.[33] In short, Pakistan being a victim of terrorism wanted to cooperate with neighbouring countries in fighting the menace of terrorism. It was unfortunate that Pakistan's sincere efforts were viewed with suspicion. Pakistan itself was relentlessly attacked by terrorists who were based in Afghanistan. On 20 January 2016 Bacha Khan University in KPK was attacked by TTP terrorists. Twenty students and a teacher were killed. Another terrorist attack on 7 March in Shabqadar killed seventeen people.

On 3 March 2016, Kul Bhushan Jadhav, an Indian Navy serving officer was arrested in Balochistan. His arrest was announced to media on March 25.[34] He confessed to be an

operative of Indian intelligence agency RAW and that he was involved in terrorist activities in Balochistan and Karachi. It was another proof of Indian state's involvement in terrorist activities in Pakistan. On 27 March in Lahore, in a park, TTP terrorists killed seventy-two people, many being Christians celebrating Easter.[35] On 22 May, Mullah Mansour the chief of Afghan Taliban was killed by a US drone strike in Pakistani territory near Afghan border. He had entered Pakistan from Iran and was headed for Afghanistan. Killing him in Pakistani territory was not only violation of Pakistan's sovereignty but also viewed as a deliberate US attempt to embarrass Pakistan. While India and US were busy maligning Pakistan for terrorism, the terrorists kept taking heavy toll of Pakistani people and economy. On 8 August 2016, TTP terrorist attack in Quetta killed fifty-four lawyers; many of them were political and human rights elite.[36]

2016 was a turning point in the history of Indian occupied Kashmir. On 8 July, Indian occupation forces killed a Kashmir freedom activist, a 22 years old Burhan Wani. The people of occupied Kashmir immediately launched massive protests and asked for freedom from Indian occupation. Indian occupation forces responded by firing at the unarmed protesters with pellet guns. The pellets not only disfigured the victims but blinded hundreds. 570 people mostly young students were admitted in one hospital only with shattered corneas and retinas with no hope of recovering eyesight.[37] In seventy days, Indian soldiers killed 118 protesters and wounded 6000.[38] Despite all atrocities the Indian occupation forces could not break the will of the freedom seeking Kashmir people. Tensions rose between India and Pakistan following an attack on Indian Army camp near Uri (West of Srinagar) on 18 September. In the attack eighteen soldiers and four attackers were killed. Most probably the attackers were Kashmiri freedom fighters who wanted to avenge the killing and maiming of innocent protesters. However, India immediately blamed foreign militants who allegedly carried weapons with Pakistani markings. Indian Prime Minister Modi declared that those

'behind' the attack will not go unpunished.'[39] All along the Line of Control and working boundary, India increased cease fire violations. There were 1100 cease fire violations from 2003 to 2013 i.e., 110 violations on the average every year. Modi's government raised these violations to nearly 2000 per year, wrecking the lives of civilians living near LOC. However Indian and international media kept harping on peace loving Indian theme.[40] During 2016 Pakistan Army had to launch five brigade sized operations in FATA to ensure that terrorist do not regain any foothold in the agencies. Successful operations were launched in area Ziaratzilla (SWA) in January and again in April 2016. In Bajaur, operation Faseel e Ahan II was launched in March. In April an operation was launched in Sanzilla in SWA. Operation Faseel e Ahan III was launched in Bajaur agency in May 16. The last operation of the year was launched in Khyber agency in August 16 to clear Tirah valley from the terrorists. With this operation terrorist were thrown further away from Peshawar city. After this operation, terrorists were cleared from whole of Khyber agency except Rajgal valley. Pakistan army kept the terrorists on the run and on the verge of ultimate defeat in FATA in 2016. In end November 2016, General Qamar Javed Bajwa took over the command of Pakistan while General Raheel Sharif retired.

2017 started with a new administration in USA. President Trump in his election campaign had promised to successfully terminate war in Afghanistan. A new strategy for Afghanistan was announced on 21 August. The strategy envisaged continued stay of US forces in Afghanistan till defeat of Taliban. Pakistan was urged to join the US led efforts to defeat the Taliban. President Donald Trump, his vice president, secretaries of defence and state and national security advisers and other senior officials highlighted the consequences that the policy hints at — from stopping US economic and military assistance to raising doubts about Pakistan's ability to provide "responsible stewardship" to its nuclear assets. There was a warning from Vice President Mike Pence that President "Trump has put Pakistan on notice," and that

"Pakistan has much to gain from partnering with the United States, and … much to lose by continuing to harbouring criminals and terrorists".[41] Trump also urged India for its role in the Afghan war, which was seen by Pakistan, as an anti-Pakistan strategy. Unfortunately, the strategy ignored major ground realities i.e., the demography and history of Afghanistan. It also failed to take note of the sensitivities of the neighbouring countries specially those of Pakistan and Iran. US think tanks themselves criticised the strategy. Michael Kugelman, deputy director and senior associate for South Asia with the Asia Program at the Woodrow Wilson Centre, said that Trump's options were limited. "This much is clear -- there are no good options in Afghanistan". Trump can't hope to "win," he said. "The best we can hope for is some type of negotiated end to the war, but it's hard to imagine the US, Afghanistan, or any other stakeholder offering incentives that are sufficiently enticing to bring the Taliban to the negotiating table. The Taliban is scoring big victories on the battlefield. Why would they want to quit when it's ahead?"[42] To execute the new US policy, Pentagon requested for 3,900 additional troops for Afghanistan.

Kashmiri freedom struggle continued in 2017 despite horrendous human rights violations by the Indian occupation forces. On 28 March, Indian occupation forces fired on protesters in Chadoora, killing three civilians and injuring at least 20 others. The incidents of clashes between freedom activists and occupation forces increased from 155 in 2016 to 190 till August 2017.[43] Pakistan continued raising Kashmir issues at all international forums highlighting atrocities by the Indian occupation forces. Due to Indian atrocities in Kashmir, violations of cease fire along LOC and blatant support of terrorists operating against Pakistan, relations with India kept on deteriorating in 2017. On 10 April 2017, Kul Bhushan Jadhav the Indian spy and terrorist ring operator was sentenced to death by a Field General Court Martial (FGCM) in Pakistan, following a confession before the magistrate and court. Jadhav's trial lasted three and a half months

and the charges he was convicted for included spying for India, waging war against Pakistan, sponsoring terrorism, and destabilising the state. Immediately after the award of death sentence to Yadav, the Indian External Affairs Minister Sushma Swaraj cautioned Pakistan for the consequences. In her statement, she said, "I would caution the Pakistani government to consider the consequences for our bilateral relationship if they proceed on this matter." The Minister also assured the Indian parliamentarians that, Indian Government would go 'all out' to save the Indian spy. Ms Swaraj also declared Yadav as the 'son of India'. Indian state instead of being worried to be associated with a terrorist decided to stand by him proving once again that Indian state sponsored terrorism in Pakistan.

There were eleven major and many minor terrorist attacks in Pakistan in 2017. Out of these eleven, four incidents happened in FATA, in Parachinar. Rest of the seven were spread all over Pakistan. It clearly indicated that the terrorists had spread into settled areas of Pakistan. On 20 January an IED killed 25 people and injured 87 in Parachinar.[44] On 13 February a suicide bomber, killed 14 people including DIG Police and SSP outside the provincial assembly in Lahore. More than 87 were injured.[45] On 16 February 88 people were killed and over 350 injured by a suicide bomber in the shrine of Lal Shahbaz in Sehwan.[46] Large number of casualties shook the government and the nation. Therefore, the government decided to launch an all-encompassing operation in Pakistan. On 22 February 2017 Pakistan army in concert with Rangers, FC, police and all intelligence agencies launched operation Raad ul Fasaad all over Pakistan. Intelligence led operations were launched against terrorists, their financers, facilitators and at times even the sympathizers. It was a full spectrum operation encompassing terrorism, crime, de-radicalizing society, new legislation etc through all available political, economic, police and military means.

On 31 March at least 25 people were killed and 90 injured in a blast in Parachinar.[47] In another blast on 25 April 14 people were

killed and 9 were injured when a passenger van was targeted in Kurram agency.[48] On 12 May 25 persons were killed in a terrorist attack in Mastung.[49] On 23 June 14 persons were killed and 19 injured in Quetta city in a suicide attack. Same day 75 people were killed and more than 150 were injured in twin blasts in a market in Parachinar.[50] On 24 July 25 persons were killed and 53 injured in a suicide attack in Lahore.[51] On 5 October 21 people were killed and 30 injured in a terror blast in Jhal Magsi Balochistan.[52] On 17 December a church was attacked in which 9 persons were killed and 57 were injured.[53] Pakistan army launched one operation in FATA in Khyber agency named 'Khyber 4' from April to May 2017 to clear Rajgal valley. With this operation complete FATA was cleared of terrorists.

From 2001 to 2017, Pakistan army fought and almost defeated terrorism. The success was achieved at a huge cost. The loss to national exchequer was worth US $ 123 billion. 75000 people lost their lives to terrorist attacks. Army lost over 4500 officers and men. To man the border with Afghanistan and to keep terrorists in check over 200,000 troops were permanently deployed in FATA.[54] Despite all these sacrifices, US government kept on harping on 'do more' mantra. USA was using Pakistan as escape goat for their failure in Afghanistan. However, India kept playing the double game of sponsoring terrorism in Pakistan through their intelligence agency RAW under 'Doval doctrine' and on the other hand kept propagating that Pakistan was sponsoring terrorism against India and in Afghanistan. This was classical fifth generation war. India had realized the impossibility of conventional war due to nuclear weapons of Pakistan and therefore had opted for sub-conventional war against Pakistan.

In short, India has kept alive its policy of subjugating Pakistan for the last 70 years. India wants to be the dominant power in the region with neighbouring countries subservient to it. It is not ready to accept Pakistan as a sovereign state pursuing independent policies. Indian belligerent policies have kept the Subcontinent highly militarized and tense, diverting national resources to

weapons instead of alleviating human misery of more than 1.5 billion people. The key to peace and prosperity in the Sub-Continent lies with India realizing that Pakistan is an independent country.

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CHAPTER 7

CHASING THE INDIAN NUCLEAR AND MISSILE THREAT

Debacle of 1971 compelled Pakistan to undertake reappraisal of its policy of nuclear abstinence. Conventional forces had proved to be inadequate to safeguard the territorial integrity of Pakistan.[1] Soon after taking over the government, President Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto convened a meeting of nuclear scientists at Multan in January 1972, to review the nuclear programme of the country. In this conference he emphasized the need to pursue a programme for developing nuclear weapons. Indian explosion of a nuclear device in May 1974 and the muted response of the world convinced Pakistan that acquisition of nuclear weapons had become a dire necessity.[2]

Appointment of Dr A.Q. Khan in 1976 to build a uranium enrichment plant at Kahuta near Islamabad was a major step in the quest for nuclear weapons. By 1982, capability to enrich uranium to the level required for making an explosive device had been achieved and by 1983 first atomic device had been made.[3] "Pakistan's nuclear weapons programme made steady progress in the 1980s, within the limits pledged to the United States. But research was speeded up in the face of India's aggressive postures, recurrent plans of airstrike on Kahuta, Indian Exercise Brass-tacks....and strategic vulnerability due to US disengagement after the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Afghanistan left Pakistan on its own."[4]

While Pakistan was concentrating on acquiring nuclear weapons technology, India which had started an integrated missile development programme in early 1980s, tested a surface to surface (SSM) nuclear weapon capable missile called Prithvi with a range of 150 kilometres in 1988. Next year it tested 1200

kilometres range surface to surface Agni missile.[5] It shook Pakistani defence planners. Introduction of guided surface to surface ballistic missile had tilted the strategic balance in India's favour. It had to be corrected. Pakistan's leadership knew that development of indigenous missile capability would take many years. They could not afford strategic imbalance in the Subcontinent for that long a period. Therefore, two decisions were taken. First was to immediately demonstrate indigenous missile or rocket capability at the earliest and second to acquire off the shelf missiles from a friendly country as soon as possible. In 1989 i.e., within one year of Indian testing of Prithvi missile, Pakistan tested Hataf 1 and 2 missiles. Hataf 1 was a single stage, solid fuel, free flight rocket with serious accuracy problem having CEP of a few kilometres. It had a range of 70 kilometres and warhead of 500 kilograms. It was inducted in service in 1992.[6] Hataf 2 was a two stage, solid fuel rocket, with a warhead of 500 kilograms and a range of 280 kilometres. Due to its inaccuracy, Hataf 2 programme was shelved in 1994.[7] Hataf 1 and 2 were more of artillery rockets than missiles as they lacked guidance system. However, they were an immediate stop gap measure and served the purpose of putting a caution on India and raising the morale of Pakistani nation. Along with development of Hataf 1and 2, negotiations for acquisition of guided missiles from China were also initiated. Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto managed to convince the Chinese leadership about Pakistan's strategic compulsions to have such missiles. China, not yet a party to MTCR restrictions, supplied short range (300 kilometres) road mobile solid fuel M-11 missiles and technology that assisted Pakistan in development of indigenous Hataf series that progressively extended range and warhead payload capacity.[8]

A composite rocket regiment with four batteries was raised by Pakistan in April 1991. First two batteries were equipped with Hataf 1 and 2 respectively. Next two batteries were equipped with Chinese M 11 missiles re-designated as Hataf 3. The regiment started receiving missiles in 1991 and became operational in 1992.

India which had tested Prithvi missile in 1988 and thus initiated missile race in the Subcontinent, raised 333 Missile Group in 1994 and equipped its units with Prithvi 1 SSM. The missile had a single stage liquid fuel motor, 1000 kilograms warhead, range of 150 kilometres and a CEP of 30-50 meters. Pakistan followed suit and orders for raising of 47 Artillery (missile) Brigade were issued on 2 August, 1995.

Prithvi 2 with a range of 350 kilometres was a two-stage liquid fuel missile with a warhead of 350 to 750 kilograms and a CEP of 10-15 meters. It was tested in 1996. Prithvi 2 had more range than Hataf 3 (M 11). The bar had once again been raised by India. Indian Prithvi 2 and Agni 1 out ranged Pakistani Hataf 3. Pakistan therefore started working on two new missiles to match Indian superiority. "Pakistan acquired liquid fuel missiles and technology from North Korea and later developed and deployed the Ghauri series".[9] Ghauri missile (Hataf 5) having a range of 1500 kilometres was tested on 6 April 1998. It had a CEP of 190 meters and a warhead of 700 kilograms. It used liquid fuel. It outranged Indian Agni 1 missile by 300 kilometres. Ghauri missile became operational in 2003.

On 11 May and again on 13 May 1998, India conducted multiple nuclear tests. Indian leaders issued threats to Pakistan. Under extreme World pressure, Pakistan government was impaled on the horns of dilemma to test or not to test.[10] Initially the Pakistani cabinet was divided about nuclear tests, but finally on 18 May 1998, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif gave the green signal.[11] 150 scientists, engineers and technicians were flown to an airport near Chagai. At 3:16 pm five bombs exploded simultaneously in an underground tunnel. Two more were successfully tested on 30 May. Nawaz Sharif declared that we have settled the score with India. The nation was exhilarated. The world noted the emergence of the seventh nuclear power.[12]

Within one year of Pakistan testing of Ghauri missile, India tested Agni 2 on 11 April 1999 with a range of 2000 to 2500

kilometres. Once again India had a missile with longer range. Pakistan responded by test firing Ghauri 2 missile on 14 April 1999. It was a liquid fuel missile with a range of 2000 kilometres.

Another missile fielded by Pakistan was Shaheen 1 (Hataf 4). It was developed in response to Prithvi 2. It was tested on 15 April 1999. It had a range of 750 kilometres, had two stage solid fuel motor and a CEP of 25 to 50 meters. This missile became operational in 2003.

On 12 June 2001 India tested supersonic Brahmos cruise missile. It had a range of 290 kilometres extendable to 400 kilometres. It was a joint venture with Russia with more than 60% and most critical parts being Russian. By 2017 India developed ship and air launched versions of the missile and equipped four army regiments with the ground launched version. India therefore introduced cruise missile technology in the region in 2001. It prompted Pakistan to start working on its indigenous cruise missile.

In 2003 India raised two missile groups (brigades) i.e., 334 Missile Group equipped with Agni 1 and 335 Missile Group equipped with Agni 2.[13] Pakistan raised 28 Missile Brigade and equipped it with Ghauri missiles.

In 2004 Pakistan tested Shaheen 2 with a range of 2000 kilometres. It was a two-stage solid fuel missile with a warhead of 700 kilograms and a CEP of 350 meters. It finally entered service in 2014. Pakistan started working on indigenous cruise missile in 2001 when India had tested Brahmos. On 12 August 2005 Pakistan successfully tested Babur (Hataf 7) cruise missile. It was a subsonic, terrain hugging, near stealth cruise missile with a warhead of 450 kilograms and a range of 500 kilometres. In 2007 its range was enhanced to 700 kilometres and it entered operational service in 2010.

On 9 July 2006 India tested Agni 3 with a range of 5000 kilometres. It was inducted in service in 2011. Ranges beyond

2500 kilometres were not relevant to Pakistan and it decided not to compete in irrelevant race of ranges beyond its strategic needs.

On 25 August 2007, Raad (Hataf 8) an air launched cruise missile with a range of 350 kilometres was tested by Pakistan Air Force. It tremendously enhanced Pakistan's nuclear weapons delivery capability. Pakistan had taken many measures to defeat Indian cold start doctrine. One of such measure was development of tactical nuclear weapons capable Nasar (Hataf 9) missile. Nasar is a multi-tube launched ballistic missile with a range of 60 kilometres. It was tested on 19 April 2011. It entered service in 2013. Nasar carries miniaturized nuclear warhead. Nasar poured hot water on Indian cold start doctrine by eliminating the so called Indian perceived available space for conventional war below nuclear threshold. This threshold was reduced to virtually nothing. Indian response to Nasar was Prahaar missile. It was tested in July 2011. With a range of 150 kilometres, Prahaar is a road, high mobility battle field missile. On 15 November 2011 India tested Agni 4 missile. It was a high velocity missile covering 4000 kilometres range in 20 minutes. It had a warhead of 1000 kilograms. Next year on 19 April 2012, India tested Agni 5, a road mobile ICBM with a range of 8000 kilometres. In 2015 India tested submarine launched Sagarika missile with a range of 750 kilometres. Pakistan followed suit and tested Babur 3 cruise missile from a submerged submarine on 9 January 2017. Babur 3 had a range of 450 kilometres.

By end 2017, both the countries had developed full spectrum, tri service, nuclear capable and highly accurate delivery systems. Both the countries had also evolved advanced command and control organizations and systems capable of surviving first strike and launching second strike. In short, because of Indian introduction of nuclear and missile technology in the Subcontinent, both the countries are now fully armed to totally destroy each other.

Indian leadership has to understand that the people of Pakistan

are prepared for all kinds of sacrifice for the sake of freedom. They have proved it in the last 70 years and would do it for ever. Constant threats to Pakistan and introduction of new weapons have failed to subdue Pakistan. It's time for Indian leadership to rethink its strategy of threats and belligerence towards Pakistan and give peace a chance.

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EPILOGUE

"The sooner India's strategic planners realize the fallacy of belittling Pakistan anywhere and everywhere and putting up stumbling blocks on the road to cooperative partnership, the better it is for South Asia."[1]

Pakistan has been accused of being India centric. Western countries led by USA have made it a norm to advise Pakistan not to be India centric and that India is not a threat. Somehow, all these countries have either not read the history of India's continued belligerence towards Pakistan or due to some policy compulsions they deliberately ignore it. While all these countries have the luxury to peruse any policy as per their national interests, Pakistan can neither overlook the seventy years of perpetual Indian aggression nor ignore the Indian massive military might deployed against its border and backed by an aggressive military doctrine.

Pakistan came into existence on 14 August 1947. After one and a half months, on 27 October 1947, Indian army started their aggression against Kashmir, a Muslim majority state, which as per the terms of 3 June 1947 agreement had to join Pakistan. Junagarh state which had acceded to Pakistan was militarily attacked and annexed by India on 9 November 1947. Hyderabad Deccan was also annexed by India after a military operation from 13 to 17 September 1948. India threatened Pakistan to cross international border if it used its military in Kashmir (Operation Venus) to safeguard its national interests in December 1948. In the first year of its existence, India emerged as an existential threat to Pakistan. Pakistan was left with few choices; either succumb to Indian pressure or to take a stand for its sovereignty whatever the cost. Pakistan opted for freedom and dignity. It was sheer threat of Indian hegemony that Pakistan decided in 1954 to join anti-communist US sponsored block although it had no threat from communist countries.

In 1965 Runn of Kutch skirmishes happened due to Indian aggressive moves and an attempt to resolve border dispute by

using force instead of negotiations. Then in August the same year while Pakistan tried to support insurgency in Indian occupied Kashmir leaving the cease fire line (CFL) intact, India launched major conventional attacks across CFL in Bedori and Jura areas thus violating CFL. Pakistan responded on 1 September by attacking in Chhamb. However, Pakistan ensured that its response to Indian attacks across CFL remained restricted to disputed territory of Kashmir. India further escalated it to a full-fledged war by attacking Pakistan across international border. India therefore was 100% responsible for 1965 war. It was with great difficulty that Pakistan blunted all Indian offensives.

About 1971 war, by now having the advantage of hindsight and all the recorded boasts of Indian leaders, there is no doubt about Indian culpability in planning and initiating the war. Indian state was fully involved in Agartala conspiracy to foster Bengali rebellion against Pakistan. Indian army launched full-fledged attack across international borders of erstwhile East Pakistan on 21 November 1971 but the Indian government kept on denying of having done so. India militarily occupied Eastern part of Pakistan but the World kept quiet. The major powers did not condemn it. For Pakistan, the message was simple and straight, that might was right, and it was on its own to defend itself.

In 1984 India unilaterally occupied Siachin glacier area. Thereafter multiple times it threatened to use its air force to raid Pakistan's nascent nuclear laboratories at Kahuta. In 1986 it moved its army to Pakistan's border and in the garb of exercise made extremely threatening manoeuvres. Pakistan was forced to respond and war was averted due to astute Pakistani and international diplomacy.

In 2001-2, while Pakistan army was busy on its western borders in war against terrorism, India moved its complete army threateningly close to Pakistani borders. Once again international diplomacy and fear of escalation to nuclear level averted the war. Instead of realizing that nuclear threat was too big a danger for the

Subcontinent, Indian military planners came up with the bogey of Cold Start Doctrine and propagated that conventional war below nuclear threshold was still possible. In short, India wants to resolve its issues with Pakistan not through negotiations but by the brute force of its armed forces. Indian introduction of nuclear and missile technology in the region reflected such a mindset.

From 2013 onwards, India has started a covert war against Pakistan by sponsoring terrorism under the so called Doval doctrine. Indian leaders including their Prime minister have openly boasted of sponsoring terrorist groups in Pakistan. There are almost daily violations of cease fire line in Kashmir and working boundary. These violations have resulted in scores of civilian casualties. India has sabotaged all kinds of negotiations including under SAARC. For Pakistan, Indian message is very clear, succumb or face all kinds of coercion.

Pakistan in last 70 years has up held its sovereignty and dignity against all coercive Indian actions. Pakistan as a nation has paid a heavy economic price for its endeavours to remain a free and sovereign nation. Our national psyche is based on freedom at all cost. While this "all cost" is a compulsion for Pakistan it is a choice for India. India, which has world's largest number of people living below poverty line, farmers committing suicides and all kinds of socio-economic ills has to make this choice of fighting its poverty or waste money in futile anti-Pakistan policy.

Key to peace and prosperity in South Asian region lies with India. The earlier it realizes the better it will be for 1.5 billion inhabitants of the region. In Europe, it took few hundred years, two world wars and millions of lost lives for Germany to realise that there was no military solution to its hegemonic designs against its neighbours. After abject military defeat, Germany had to make territorial sacrifices to buy peace. Japans militarily imposed policy of Co-Prosperity sphere in the Far East failed and resulted in a disastrous defeat. The imposed peace and a pacifist constitution heralded an era of economic prosperity. It is because

of peace with neighbours that today Japan and Germany are the third and fourth largest world economies of the World respectively.

India has to choose between just and dignity-based peace with neighbours or continued tensions and poverty at home and in the region.

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