

**ARMED FORCES OF  
THE INDIAN UNION**

||  
**HISTORY OF**  
||  
**THE INDO-PAK WAR, 1965**

**BY**

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FOREWORD

Right from October 1947, when it engineered the tribal invasion to capture Kashmir, Pakistan has chosen to follow a path of confrontation with India. The Indo-Pak War 1965 was the outcome of a prolonged and well rehearsed "hate India" campaign launched by the Pakistan Govt. Pakistan sought to achieve by war what it could not achieve through diplomacy. India responded to this act of aggression.

Initially, in August 1965, Pakistan attempted to secure Kashmir valley through infiltration. However, our forces timely encountered this attempt, sealing the infiltration routes. Thereafter, Pakistan launched an attack in the Chhamb Jaurian sector (Op Grand Slam), with a view to capturing Jammu and thereby disrupting the lines of supply for our forces deployed in Jammu & Kashmir. Our Army launched a diversionary attack on the western front and thwarted Pakistan's second attempt to grab the valley.

The essential objective of this history of the Indo-Pak War of 1965 is to place on record an objective account of the events which took place. As such, the present work is not an attempt to glorify or denigrate the Armed Forces locked in battle. A study of this history reveals various shortcomings on both sides. I am sure military experts will draw the emerging lessons, for application to tactical planning for future operations, such as may arise.

[N.N.VOHRA]

DEFENCE SECRETARY

31 December 1992

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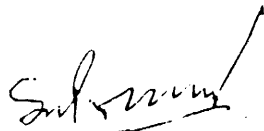
PREFACE

In March 1983, while enjoying my retirement in Varanasi, I was recalled to duty to compile the history of Indo-Pak War, 1971, which ended in a decisive victory for India. After completing this task in 1985, the Government asked me to take up the compilation of the histories of the Conflict with China, 1962, and the Indo-Pak War, 1965. These histories were also completed by 1990, and are now being photocopied for limited circulation.

This history of Indo-Pak War, 1965, is as complete and as authentic as we could make it. In this effort we have consulted the available records and documents of the Ministries and departments of the Government. The mass of information culled from the Government files was supplemented by interviewing important participants in the war. Published sources, of course, were also consulted. I hope this history can be published by the Ministry of Defence soon without any reservations, as it has been revised and edited in the light of the comments made by various ministries and departments, and covers a non-controversial subject.

The Government provided to me the assistance of a small team of specialist scholars and service officers to complete the assignment. The book could not have been completed in time without their dedicated and competent efforts, and I am grateful to all of them. I am also grateful to all the concerned Ministries, Intelligence Agencies and Services Headquarters, who vetted the draft history. However, this history does not always reflect their views or commit the Government in any manner. The author and I accept full responsibility for the facts stated and the opinions expressed.

In the end, I would like to acknowledge with gratitude the painstaking and whole hearted contribution of Dr. U.P. Thapliyal, Director, History Division, in preparing the final press copy and in bringing out this work. Shri R.C. Baluja and Shri T.R. Gulati, SROs, also deserve thanks for ably assisting him. My sincere thanks are also due to the secretarial staff and typists involved in the project, specially Shri D.C. Kashyap and Shri D. Tamil Selvan, who worked tirelessly and for long hours to produce a fair copy of the draft. The work could never have been accomplished, of course, without the active support and personal interest of the Defence Ministers and Secretaries (especially Shri S.K. Bhatnagar, Shri Naresh Chandra and Shri N.N. Vohra), to whom I feel deeply indebted.



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INDO-PAK WAR, 1965

CONTENTS

	<u>Page</u>
Preface	v
Introduction	xx

CHAPTER I

THE PROLOGUE

Pak Belligerence over Kashmir since 1947	1
Cultivating USA	4
China Factor	5
Courting the Communists	7
Pak Military Build-up	8
Fishing in Troubled Waters	9
NOTES AND REFERENCES	15

CHAPTER II

CONFLICT IN KUTCH, 1965

The Terrain	16
Kutch-Sind Boundary Dispute	17
Indian Precautions	18
Trouble at Kanjarkot	19
Operation KABADI	21
Exercise ARROW HEAD	22
Desert Hawk-I	23
Indian Forces Reorganised	26
Desert Hawk-II	29
Desert Hawk-III	30
Loss of Biar Bet	32
The Cease-Fire Agreement	35
Conclusion	37
NOTES AND REFERENCES	40

RESTRICTED

CHAPTER III

PAK PLANS AND MOVES AGAINST KASHMIR

General	45
Holy Relic Incident	45
Internment of Sheikh Abdullah	46
Stepping up of Cease-Fire Violations	47
Kargil Operations	48
Capture of Kala Pahar	50
Outstanding Features of the Operation	51
Hard Won Gains Given Up	53
Who Planned Operation Gibraltar	54
NOTES AND REFERENCES	57

CHAPTER IV

OP GIBRALTAR

THE INFILTRATORS	59
Basic Organisation	60
Training	60
Arms and Equipment	61
Administration	61
Tasks/Objectives	63
Grouping and Induction	63
Routes and Infiltration	64
Infiltration Plan	65
ACTIVITIES OF GIBRALTAR FORCE	66
The Valley	67
Kargil Sector	67
Kishanganga Sector	68
Tithwal-Tangdhar Sector	68
Mendhar-Rajauri-Chingas-Jhangar Sector	69
Kalidhar-Samba Sector	69



INFILTRATION HIGHLIGHTS	70
COUNTER-INFILTRATION OPERATIONS	79
Recapture of Kargil Heights	79
Tithwal Sector	80
Capture of Haji Pir Pass	82
Operation Bakshi	84
Operation Faulad	87
Helicopter Support	89
THE UN ROLE	89
WHY "GIBRALTAR" FAILED	92
NOTES AND REFERENCES	94

CHAPTER V

"GRAND SLAM" AND XV CORPS RESPONSE

OPERATION ABLAZE	96
Pak Plans	97
Indian Preparations	102
Pak Offensive Against Chhamb	111
Chhamb-Mandiala Battle	116
Meghdoot Force	126
Operations after Cease-Fire	127
Mendhar Sector - The Battle of Op Hill	129
Kishanganga Sector - The Straightening of the Bulge	133
Conclusion	134
NOTES AND REFERENCES	137

CHAPTER VI

ALL-OUT WAR

Terrain	140
THE XI CORPS	141
15 DIVISION OPERATIONS	145
Plan	145
Initial Successes	148

RESTRICTED

Change of GOC	150
Bharat Force	154
The Jallo Bridge	155
SECOND BATTLE OF DOGRAI	156
Phase I - Attack by 13 Punjab	157
Phase II - Attack by 3 Jat	158
7 INF DIV OPERATIONS	161
Plan	161
Advance to Hudiara	162
Capture of Barki	164
Struggle on the Ichhogil	166
Conclusion	168
4 MTN DIV OPERATIONS	169
Plan	169
Initial Successes	170
Pattons Smashed	172
Sikhs Caught at Khem Karan	175
Assessment	178
29 Brigade in DBN	179
67 Brigade Operations	183
23 MTN DIV - A NON-STARTER	186
Assessment of XI Corps Operation	185
NOTES AND REFERENCES	188

CHAPTER VII

OPERATIONS IN SIALKOT SECTOR

ORBAT AND PLAN	193
Terrain	193
Build-up	193
Plan	194
SECURING THE RIGHT FLANK	196
6 Div Takes Charwa and Maharajke	196
26 Div Takes Wains and Bajragarhi	198

ARMoured THRUST TO PHILLORA	200
Attack Launched	200
Advance to Kaloi	202
Revised Plan for the Assault	203
The Battle	205
FURTHER OPERATIONS, 12-22 SEPTEMBER	209
Consolidation and Regrouping	209
14 Inf Div Sector	210
Capture of Pagowal	211
First Battle of Chawinda	212
Regrouping and New Plans	214
The Second Failure at Chawinda	216
26 Infantry Div Sector	220
Cease-Fire and Conclusion	221
NOTES AND REFERENCES	225

CHAPTER VIII

RAJASTHAN SECTOR: 11 INF DIV OPERATIONS

Terrain	228
The Rival Forces	230
Operations	231
Capture of Gadra City	232
A Night of Confusion	232
Skirmishes around Munabao	233
Indian Raids	235
Pak Attacks at Panchla and Munabao	236
Jessa-ka-Par and Dali	237
85 Inf Bde Comes In	238
Pak Attempt to Recapture Sakarbu	239
Assessment	240
NOTES AND REFERENCES	243

RESTRICTED

CHAPTER IX

THE AIR WAR

The Contending Forces	245
Air Operations Begin	247
PAF Raids Against IAF Bases: 6 September	249
Pak Paratroopers	252
IAF Counter-Attack: 7 September	254
Air Operations in the East	256
Further Air Operations: 8-22 September	258
Assessment	267
NOTES AND REFERENCES	274

CHAPTER X

INDIAN NAVY IN THE WAR

War Approaching	278
The Rival Fleets	280
Plans and Preparations	283
Operations of the Fleet	286
The Naval Air Arm	292
Conclusion	295
NOTES AND REFERENCES	297

CHAPTER XI

WAR DIPLOMACY, CEASE-FIRE AND TASHKENT

UN Efforts	299
China's Role	306
The Cease-Fire	311
Soviet Role	313
Fighting after Cease-Fire	315
TASHKENT DECLARATION	318
Casualties and Loss of Territory	320
NOTES AND REFERENCES	323

RESTRICTED

CHAPTER XII

<u>REVIEW AND REFLECTIONS</u>	326
NOTES AND REFERENCES	339
 <u>APPENDICES</u>	
1. AGREEMENT ON KUTCH	340
2. PROCLAMATION OF WAR OF LIBERATION	343
3. CAPTURED OP ORDER OF PAK ARMY	346
4. OP ORDER OF 1 CORPS	355
5. IAF ORBAT: 1 SEPTEMBER 1965	361
6. AIR RAIDS ON AIRFIELDS	363
7. TASHKENT DECLARATION	364
8. AGREEMENT ON WITHDRAWAL OF TROOPS	367
9. ROLE OF PARA-MILITARY FORCES AND CIVILIANS	372
10. WINNERS OF GALLANTRY AWARDS	385
 PERSONS INTERVIEWED	 398
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 402

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LIST OF MAPS

<u>Srl No.</u>		<u>Facing page</u>
1.	Pak Attacks in Kutch, 1965	23
2.	Kutch Dispute: Rival Claims and Final Award	37
3.	Pakistani Infiltration into J & K	66
4.	The Haji Pir Operation	84
5.	Chhamb-Jaurian Battle, 1-10 Sep, 1965	116
6.	Indo-Pak War, 1965 - Punjab Theatre	141
7.	3 Jat Action in Dograi (6 Sep 1965)	148
8.	Battle of Barki (7 Inf Div Sector)	164
9.	Battle of Asal Uttar, 8-10 Sep, 1965	172
10.	Planned Pak Armd Thrust, Sep 1965	173
11.	67 Inf Bde Sector	183
12.	Operations of I Corps, 8 Sep to 22 Sep, 1965	196
13.	Indian Thrusts to Phillaurah - Chawinda	200
14.	11 Inf Div Ops	231
15.	Air Raids: East & West, Sep 1965	247
16.	Areas Occupied at Cease-Fire	320

ABBREVIATIONS

AA	- Anti Aircraft
AAR	- After Action Report
ACM	- Air Chief Marshal
ACT	- Air Control Team
AD	- Air Defence
Adm	- Admiral/Administration
AFV	- Armoured Fighting Vehicle
AHQ	- Army Headquarters
Air Cmde	- Air Commodore
AK	- Automat Kalashnikov
Amb	- Ambulance
Amn	- Ammunition
AOC	- Air Officer Commanding/ Army Ordnance Corps
AOP	- Air Observation Post
APC	- Armoured Personnel Carrier
Armd	- Armoured
Arty	- Artillery
ASC	- Army Service Corps
ATC	- Air Traffic Control
AVM	- Air Vice Marshal
AVSM	- Ati Vishisht Seva Medal
Bde	- Brigade
BIO	- Brigade Intelligence Officer
BMG	- Browning Machine Gun
Bn	- Battalion
BPI	- Bulk Petrol Installation
Brig	- Brigadier
BSF	- Border Security Force
Bty	- Battery
CAP	- Combat Air Patrol
Capt	- Captain
Cav	- Cavalry
CAS	- Chief of the Air Staff
Cdr	- Commander
CENTO	- Central Treaty Organisation

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CFL	- Cease Fire Line
C-in-C	- Commander-in-Chief
CIH	- Central India Horse
Cmde	- Commodore
CNS	- Chief of Naval Staff
CO	- Commanding Officer
COAS	- Chief of the Army Staff
Col	- Colonel
Comp Mtn Btys	- Composite Mountain Batteries
Comp Mtn Regts	- Composite Mountain Regiments
COS	- Chief of Staff
Coy	- Company
CQMH	- Company Quarter Master Havildar
CRP	- Central Reserve Police
CZA	- Communication Zone Area
DBN	- Dera Baba Nanak
DIG	- Deputy Inspector General
Div	- Division
DMI	- Director of Military Intelligence
DMO	- Director of Military Operations
DNO	- Directorate of Naval Operations
DSO	- Distinguished Service Order
DZ	- Dropping Zone
EAC	- Eastern Air Command
EC	- Eastern Command
EME	- Electrical & Mechanical Engineers
Engrs	- Engineers
Fd	- Field
Fd Pk Coy	- Field Park Company
Fd Regt	- Field Regiment
Fd Regt (SP)	- Field Regiment (Self-Propelled)
Fd Regt (TA)	- Field Regiment (Territorial Army)
FF (R&S)	- Frontier Force (Reconnaissance & Support)
Fg Offr	- Flying Officer
Flt Lt	- Light Lieutenant
FM	- Field Marshal
FOC	- Flag Officer Commanding
FOCIF	- Flag Officer Commanding Indian Fleet



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FOO	- Forward Observation Officer
FUP	- Forming Up Place
GA	- Ground Attack
Garh Rif	- Garhwal Rifles
Gen	- General
GHQ	- General Headquarters
GNP	- Gross National Product
GOC	- General Officer Commanding
Gp	- Group
GR	- Gorkha Rifles
GSO	- General Staff Officer
HF	- Harassing Fire
HQ/Hqrs	- Headquarters
Hr(s)	- Hour(s)
Hy	- Heavy
IAF	- Indian Air Force
IDSA	- Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis
IN	- Indian Navy
Inf	- Infantry
INS	- Indian Naval Ship
IST	- Indian Standard Time
ITB Force	- Indo-Tibetan Border Force
JAK Militia/Rif	- Jammu & Kashmir Militia/Rifles
JCO	- Junior Commissioned Officer
JCP	- Joint Check Post (of India & Pakistan)
Kg	- Kilogram
Km	- Kilometre
LAA Regt	- Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment
LAD	- Light Aid Detachment
L Hav	- Lance Havildar
LI	- Light Infantry
L Nk	- Lance Naik

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LMG	-	Light Machine Gun
L of C	-	Line or Lines of Communication
Lt/Lieut	-	Lieutenant
Maint	-	Maintenance
Maj	-	Major
M & G Area	-	Maharashtra & Gujarat Area
MC	-	Military Cross
MEA	-	Ministry of External Affairs
Med Regt	-	Medium Regiment
MG	-	Machine Gun
MH	-	Military Hospital
MHA	-	Ministry of Home Affairs
MI	-	Military Intelligence
Mil	-	Military
MM	-	Milimetre
MMG	-	Medium Machine Gun
MO	-	Military Operations
MOP	-	Mobile Observation Post
Mor Regt	-	Mortar Regiment
Mtn	-	Mountain
MU	-	Mobile Unit
MVC	-	Maha Vir Chakra
NATO	-	North Atlantic Treaty Organisation
Nb Sub	-	Naib Subedar
NCsE	-	Non-Combatants Enrolled
NCO	-	Non-Commissioned Officer
NEFA	-	North East Frontier Agency
NHQ	-	Naval Headquarters
Nk	-	Naik
OO	-	Operation Order
OP	-	Operation
OR	-	Other Rank
ORBAT	-	Order of Battle
Ord	-	Ordnance
ORP	-	Operational Readiness Platform
PAF	-	Pakistan Air Force

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PAP	- Punjab Armed Police
Para	- Parachute
Pl	- Platoon
PNS	- Pakistan Naval Ship
POK	- Pakistan Occupied Kashmir
POL	- Petrol, Oil and Lubricant
POW	- Prisoner of War
PR	- Photographic Reconnaissance
Pt	- Point
PVC	- Param Vir Chakra
PVSM	- Param Vishisht Seva Medal
RAC	- Rajasthan Armed Constabulary
RADM	- Rear Admiral
Raj Rif	- Rajputana Rifles
RCL	- Recoilless
Recce	- Reconnaissance/Reconnoitre
Regt	- Regiment
Retd	- Retired
Ris	- Risaldar
RT	- Radio Telephone
SA	- Small Arms
SAGW	- Surface to Air Guided Weapons
SC	- Southern Command
SEATO	- South East Asia Treaty Organisati
Sep	- Sepoy
Sig	- Signal
SRP	- State Reserve Police
SU	- Signal Units
Sub	- Subedar
Sqn Ldr	- Squadron Leader
Tac	- Tactical
TAC	- Tactical Air Centre
Tk(s)	- Tank(s)
Tp	- Troop
Tr	- Track
UNFO Team	- United Nations Forward Observer Team

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UNIPOM	- United Nations India Pakistan Observer Mission
UNMOGIP	- United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan
UP	- Uttar Pradesh
VCAS	- Vice Chief of the Air Staff
VCNS	- Vice Chief of the Naval Staff
VCOAS	- Vice Chief of the Army Staff
VIP	- Very Important Person
Vr C	- Vir Chakra
VSM	- Vishisht Seva Medal
WAC	- Western Air Command
WC	- Western Command
WD	- War Diary
Wg Cdr	- Wing Commander
Wksp	- Workshop
WNC	- Western Naval Command
WPR	- West Pakistan Rangers
WPT	- West Pakistan Time

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LOOKING BACK

Whatever the reasons, the fact stands out that Pakistan and India developed an adversarial relationship right from 1947. Perhaps this relationship was necessary for the very survival of Pakistan. For if Pakistan lived in amity and cordiality with India, the average Pakistani might start questioning the necessity for the partition of the sub-continent, and its continuance, in the face of cultural, economic and military logic. So an anti-India stance was always considered essential by the Pakistani ruling elite. And Pakistan's re-armament with massive US aid from 1954 onwards, though ostensibly against the Communist Powers, was against India in reality. This was known to all, except perhaps the Americans, and Chou En Lai himself once blessed Pakistan's membership of SEATO, since it enabled Pakistan to acquire armaments which China was unable to provide(1).

The valley of Kashmir provided the main bone of contention between India and Pakistan. Indo-Pak antagonism crystallised as the Kashmir issue, and it became a primary objective of Pakistan's foreign policy to obtain possession of Kashmir, by whatever means.

It would appear that Pakistan missed a golden opportunity by not grabbing Kashmir immediately after the Chinese attack on India in 1962. But the developments were too sudden and unexpected and found Pakistan unprepared to take immediate advantage of the situation militarily. Moreover, India had not significantly reduced its forces on the West Pakistan front to fight the Chinese. The USA and UK declared their full sympathy and support to India, making it almost impossible for Pakistan to attack India in collusion with the Chinese. So Pakistan tried to secure its objective in Kashmir by diplomatic pressure.

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1. During a visit to Beijing, "At one time, when Ayub Khan was somewhat apologetic about our continued membership of SEATO, Chou En Lai had assured him that .... China, did not mind (it) .... It was just as well, he had said jokingly, for China to have a friend in SEATO. He had also said that since China was not in a position to provide the hardware, it was in Pakistan's interest that it should secure this from the United States". ... Asghar Khan, Air Marshal (Retd), "The First Round: Indo-Pakistan War 1965", p.113, (Vikas Publishing House Pvt Ltd, Sahibabad, 1979).

Prof Galbraith, the American Ambassador at New Delhi, has recorded in some detail his honest broker act between India and Pakistan, which, however, brought no tangible results(1). The golden opportunity for Pakistan in 1962-63 was thus a mere illusion.

Rudely jolted by the Chinese attack, India launched a major modernisation and expansion programme for her armed forces. It was expected that within five years they would total a million men, armed with modern weapons. When the Indian re-armament was completed, Pakistan would have little chance of any successful military adventure against India. It seemed a matter of now or never for Pakistan.

The fighting in Kutch in the spring of 1965 came before the military balance had tilted decisively against Pakistan. The Kutch imbroglio appears to have been unplanned, and not the result of any diabolical Pakistani design. But the continued inflow of massive American military aid had engendered a mood of belligerence and confidence in the Pakistani armed forces, particularly because the Govt in Pakistan was a military dictatorship under Field Marshal Ayub Khan. So we find Pakistan throwing in its main battle tanks also in what was basically a border skirmish between para-military patrols of India and Pakistan. The result of the fighting in Kutch was hailed as a military victory in Pakistan. India's failure to hit back in full force, at Kutch or elsewhere along the Pakistan border, was taken to be a proof of timidity and lack of confidence. The short statured and unassuming Lal Bahadur Shastri, who had succeeded the great Jawahar Lal Nehru, appeared to be no match for the hefty and imposing Ayub Khan. Pakistan experienced great euphoria. The historic moment seemed to have arrived for Pakistan to solve the Kashmir problem in its own way and to its full satisfaction.

The historic moment appeared to find the historic man already there, and straining at the leash. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, tall, always immaculately dressed, foreign educated Foreign Minister of Pakistan, prevailed upon President Ayub Khan to launch Operation 'Gibraltar', so that Pakistani infiltrators could trigger off an uprising in the Kashmir valley leading to its merger with Pakistan. Operation 'Gibraltar' was undertaken against the advice of Pakistan Army Headquarters, and it is believed widely

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1. Galbraith, J.K., "Ambassador's Journal: A Personal Account of the Kennedy Years" (London, 1969).

that Bhutto's real aim was to discredit the military and to come to power in Pakistan, because he knew that Operation 'Gibraltar' would result in Pakistani defeat(1). Many perceptive Pakistanis have admitted openly that it was a disastrous plan, executed disastrously. Air Marshal Asghar Khan (Retd) has attributed the failure of the operation to the fact that "the stepping up of the tempo was not gradual enough to give it the character of an internal up-rising, nor was it controlled sufficiently to keep it within the bounds of Indian political and military acceptability"(2). It was bound to result in failure, and was then followed by Operation 'Grand Slam' against Chhamb. To the consternation of the Pakistan High Command, the meek and unimpressive Indian Prime Minister responded by sanctioning the opening of a second front against Pakistan in the Punjab.

The general war that followed showed up the Pakistani as well as the Indian armed forces in definitely poor light. There was lack of professional competence and good Generalship on either side. The Pakistanis have openly debated in the press and through professional journals the various aspects of their performance in the war(3). There has been no corresponding debate in India, in spite of India being an open society as against dictatorship in Pakistan. But the performance of the Indian Armed Forces was equally if not more unimpressive, as discussed in detail in the last chapter of this history.

In the high realm of politico-military interface, the Indian performance was indeed laudable, due mainly to the unique qualities of Lal Bahadur Shastri. There was complete understanding and trust between the civil Govt. and the military establishment. The Home Front stood solidly behind the armed forces, and the civil population identified itself with the war effort to a degree unexcelled before or since then. International diplomacy was handled competently, as evidenced in dealing with China, the USA and the USSR. However, Inter Services cooperation was far from satisfactory. The institutional framework for it was rudimentary, and the situation on the ground left much to be desired. The Indian Navy was given the minimum role in the war. Army-Air cooperation was primitive and ineffective. Many senior army officers had no experience of modern war and a very inadequate appreciation of the potentialities and limitations of air power.

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1. Remarks of Lt Gen M. Habibullah Khan Khattak (Retd), reproduced in Strategic Digest (IDSA, New Delhi, July 1984), p.727.
  2. Asghar Khan, p.76.
  3. Strategic Digest (IDSA, New Delhi), July 1984 and February 1987.

As regards the Indian Army, problems emerged even at the planning stage. There were deep differences between Gen Chaudhuri, Lt Gen Harbakhsh Singh and Maj Gen Niranjan Prasad about the axis of the main attack and its timing. Lt Gen Dhillon, the Commander XI Corps, appears to have had no particular opinion of his own. There were allegations that Maj Gen Rajendra Singh (Sparrow), the General Officer Commanding 1 Armd Div, had direct approach to the Army Chief, the Corps Commander and the Army Commander being ignored. The lack of success of many of the plans was attributed to these major flaws and differences of opinion in planning. But it is clear that the execution of these plans was also over cautious. The main Indian armoured strike force moving into Sialkot area advanced at the pace of the infantry rather than armour(1). On the Lahore front, the troops fell back from the Ichhogil Canal due to PAF air strikes and failure of the supporting echelons to come up quickly. There was the bizarre episode of the order to XI Corps to retreat from Amritsar to the Beas bridge because of the supposed break through of Pakistani armour from Khem-Karan(2). Many officers, including General officers, were sacked in the course of the operations. Many opportunities were lost. It must be recalled, however, that the Field Officers of the Indian Army acquitted themselves gloriously. The new breed Majors and Captains were cool and competent professionals, and the unusually high percentage of casualties they suffered testified to their elan and determination to wipe out the stigma of the 1962 reverses(3).

Performance of the IAF was equally patchy. In planning, there was no definite allocation of air effort for ground support of the Army. The crucially important opportunity to strike first on the morning of 6 September was ignored. The Counter Air strikes against Pakistani air bases were given up too soon, and purely defensive Combat Air Patrols and escort missions took up most of the IAF effort. Missions were not well planned, as witnessed over Chhamb on 1 September, when the old Vampires were sent and four of them were shot down by the PAF Sabres within minutes. Again, the vitally important raid against Sargodha base of the PAF on 7 September, was timed too early, before dawn, and the Indian pilots found it too dark to spot the targets on the ground. Only the gallantry and skill of the individual pilots of the IAF shone brightly in the saga of the air war.

- 
1. See Chapter VII of this history.
  2. Briefly referred to in Chapter VI.
  3. Refer to Chapter XII for details.



The overall performance of the Pakistani armed forces was equally poor. Pakistani officers, to their great credit, have debated openly and exhaustively the flaws in their performance in the 1965 war(1). They have concluded that the whole adventure presented by Operation 'Gibraltar' was misconceived. Operation 'Grand Slam' fell flat in execution, supposedly after Maj Gen Akhtar Husain Malik was replaced by Maj Gen Yahya Khan as the General Officer Commanding 12 Inf Division in the middle of Chhamb battle. The change was probably the result of internal political conflicts within the Army hierarchy. Pakistan Army Headquarters appears to have been caught totally by surprise when the Indian attack came towards Lahore in the morning of 6 September. Maj Gen Sarfraz is reported to have been sleeping peacefully in his quarters in Lahore Cantonment at that time. The armoured thrust through Khem Karan was not planned or stage-managed competently, apart from the element of luck going against Pakistan. On the Sialkot front, the Pakistan Army proved doughty and fought well, though its performance shone brighter due to the poor Generalship and timid handling of armour on the Indian side. The Pakistan Air Force gave comparatively better performance, for example, at Pathankot on 6 September, at Sargodha and Kalaikunda on 7 September.

By about 20th September, Pakistan had shot her bolt. She was exhausted. Her armoured formations had received heavy battering, and artillery ammunition was almost used up. India would have won a decisive victory if the war had continued much longer. But the Indian Army Chief was over cautious, and 'cease fire' came. Tashkent, therefore, saved Pakistan, although the Pakistanis attribute their deliverance to the 3 'A's - Allah, Air Force and Artillery, in that order!

If Tashkent saved Pakistan, it also destroyed Ayub Khan. Throughout the conflict, the Pakistani public was being fed on stories of bravery, success and victory over the cowardly Indians. The public was, therefore, confused and very angry when President Ayub Khan agreed to a cease fire, and the settlement at Tashkent proved that the contest had been a draw and not a victory for Pakistan. It proved the beginning of the end for Ayub Khan. Here was a classic case of false propaganda coming back like a boomerang.

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1. Strategic Digest (IDSA, New Delhi), July 1984 and February 1987.

Although in military terms the contest was a draw, it should be noted that in the overall context it was a clear victory for India. The Indian war aim was to preserve the status-quo in Jammu and Kashmir and to foil Pakistani attempt to grab it. These limited and defensive aims were fully achieved. India deliberately opted for as short and as limited a conflict as possible. East Pakistan (now Bangladesh) was not attacked. The Indian Navy was held back from any offensive action. Even the IAF was not thrown into battle against Pakistan territory till after the PAF had attacked Indian air bases on the evening of 6 September, causing serious loss at Pathankot at least. Cease-fire was accepted when India was still capable of continuing the fight, and when the enemy was showing signs of total exhaustion. So the aggressor was let off lightly. Pakistan would have suffered a crushing defeat if the IAF had launched a full scale pre-emptive attack against the PAF on the morning of 6 September itself, and if the Army had really gone for a kill when the enemy was tottering after 20 September. The Indians, they say, lack, 'the killer instinct', whether it be a battle ground or the play field. In any case, the Indian Government and military leadership accepted a stalemate and refrained from humbling Pakistan, in the belief that this moderation would lead to less bitterness and more friendly relations. But in 1965, as again in 1971, these humane sentiments and noble assessments proved definitely inapplicable in the case of Pakistan. One wonders whether the correct deductions have been made in the quarters concerned.