

only as the British were first seen to be active interlopers on the local scene. The Hindu religion is an ancient and widespread one as well with roots in much of Asia, and branches as far afield as southern and eastern Africa and the West Indies.

Under the Raj, there were differences between these two main founding peoples of India and Pakistan but many more among the large number of other groups making up especially what was to be the new Indian state. A policy of "divide and rule," normal under European and indeed Moghul imperialism, was perhaps in some ways more benign under London but was nonetheless extremely visible. Those divisions, already enormous, were not helpful when, once exacerbated by the politics of British India and plans for its future independence, they took more stark national and ethnic forms.

Partition took place under dreadful circumstances with enormous amounts of civil strife and vast numbers of dead and injured as the price. A dramatically and geographically divided Pakistan reached independence alongside a more ethnically divided India but one that was infinitely richer and larger. Problems of social and political cohesion under a united India were to have impacts on international relations issues of vast consequences in the newly independent context of 1947 and beyond.

The two countries nonetheless lived in peace for a number of years after the fighting over Partition. They did that despite a simmering conflict over control of the wide Kashmir region in the north, any number of trans-border difficulties, inherited unhappiness from the Raj and partition experiences, and more minor irritants. In 1965, India and Pakistan had their first real post-independence war but it should be remembered this was three years after India's first open conflict with China. Thus the automaticity of conflict may well be exaggerated by some. Indeed, the conflict was not very large either, however troubling it was to prove. There had been small-scale clashes in the disputed Rann of Kutch district in April and May of that year, and these were followed by a 22-day undeclared war, sparked by internal Kashmiri problems, which saw limited ground action take place. Air operations, except for very reduced air combat, was restricted to support operations and strikes at airfields and installations. And naval action entailed merely the Pakistani bombardment of Dwarka. A UN-sponsored cease-fire put paid to the fighting at that stage.

For the first eighteen years of independence, the India of Nehru was known for a peaceful diplomacy of great breadth. Foreign policy was activist, non-aligned, and inventive. Pakistan's was perhaps less noticed by the rest of the world, lacking size and a leader of Nehru's stature, but it took on a reputation for seriousness as well. The first round of war, however limited, shook the region. In the first place, it added to India's insecurities since it was the exacerbation of yet another conflict situation to be placed alongside the difficult one with neighbouring China. And it shook India's self-image as a pacific nation anxious to take a special part in fashioning international security. In the context of the preceding conflict with China, and the potential for some sort of joint reaction to it, the India-Pakistan war seemed to show that those two South Asian countries were somehow destined to remain in dispute.