

**An Atlas  
of the  
1971 India - Pakistan War:**

**The Creation of Bangladesh**

**by  
John H. Gill**

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## Author's Preface

The 1971 War is the most recent major India-Pakistan conflict and the most important in the confrontational relationship of the two South Asian rivals. India's dramatic victory not only brought Bangladesh into being and reduced Pakistan by half, it also resulted in the formalization of Soviet-Indian ties in a prewar treaty, generated enduring suspicion in US-India relations, and launched Pakistan's nuclear program on the course that ended with its weapons' tests in May 1998. Similarly, the accord signed between the two combatants at Simla in July 1972 has been a touchstone of Indian foreign policy for thirty years, framing interaction with Pakistan as well as relations with external powers.

These dramatic results notwithstanding, many of the fundamental issues of the subcontinent remained unresolved. Pakistan was traumatized, but even India, as the years have passed, has found itself not entirely satisfied with the outcome: questions of national identity and the pertinacious Kashmir problem have retarded progress in the region for the past three decades. Moreover, the India-Pakistan dynamic has moved no closer to balance, the relationship between a struggling middle power and a potential major power remains a dangerous rivalry rather than a partnership of reconciled neighbors. In addition to these underlying considerations, the 1971 War has become a key facet of the complex lens through which decision makers in New Delhi and Islamabad view themselves, their bilateral relations, and their interaction with the rest of the world.

The 1971 War thus continues to reverberate today at the highest levels of national policy in South Asia. Abiding bitterness over the war within Pakistan's military leadership, for example, was a contributing factor leading to the Kargil incursion in 1999; latent but visceral mistrust between Pakistan and Bangladesh concerning alleged atrocities during 1971 resurfaced in the fall of 2000; aspects of the conflict featured prominently during the July 2001 India-Pakistan summit in Agra; Pakistan's President General Pervez Musharraf offered regrets for the events of 1971 during a visit to Bangladesh in August 2002; and the war featured in acrimonious Indian state election campaigning in Gujarat during December 2002.

The present study concentrates on the military operations of the 1971 War. It does not pretend to encompass the complex weave of domestic and foreign policies of the two belligerents except insofar as these influenced the actions of their armed forces.<sup>1</sup> Rather, this atlas is intended to provide policy makers, diplomats, military analysts, and historians a ready resource for objective study of the war and for comparison of operations during 1971 with previous and subsequent events. Every effort has been made to utilize the best available public sources, but any errors of interpretation or analysis, of course, are the author's alone.

## Conventions

**Boundaries:** the maps in this atlas depict approximate boundaries only. They are neither definitive nor authoritative.

**Place Names:** for the sake of simplicity, place names are given in the form most common in 1971: thus Dacca (Dhaka), Bombay (Mumbai), and Calcutta (Kolkata). Two of the major rivers in East Pakistan/Bangladesh have dual names: the Ganges is also the Padma, and the Jamuna also carries the name Brahmaputra for part of its course. Note that the river that flows past Jamalpur and Mymensingh in north-central Bangladesh is generally known as the “old Brahmaputra.”

### Units:

- Having evolved from the British Indian Army, the Indian and Pakistani armies have followed a British-style regimental system and used British designations for the echelons of command since independence. Infantry battalions, approximately the same size as their U.S. counterparts, are given a numerical designation within their regiments such as 4 Sikh (4th Battalion, the Sikh Regiment). Battalions of India’s Gorkha (Indian spelling) Rifles make a small exception, being identified by two numbers indicating battalion and Gorkha regiment: 5/5 Gorkha Rifles is thus the 5th Battalion of the 5th Gorkha Rifles. Armored and artillery “regiments” are the equivalent of U.S. battalions: 40-50 tanks and 18 artillery pieces respectively. Several of the older armored regiments bear honored historical names dating from the colonial period; India’s 9 Horse is thus also the “Deccan Horse.” Note that both countries have a Punjab Regiment on their rolls.

- Similarly, subunits within armored regiments are called squadrons and troops after British practice rather than the U.S. terminology of companies and platoons.

- Ranks are likewise based on the British system: brigadiers rather than brigadier generals in the armies, and the system of squadron leaders, air marshals, etc. in the air forces.

- Pakistani units raised in the portion of Kashmir it controls are known by the Pakistani designation of “Azad Kashmir” (AK) meaning “free” or “liberated” Kashmir. Note, however, that Indian sources usually refer to these troops as “Pakistan Occupied Kashmir” or “POK” units.

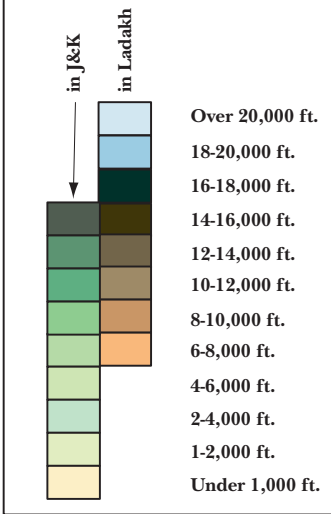
- Special units. Two Indian infantry battalions were mounted on camels for use in the desert (13 and 17 Grenadiers). The Indian Army included “paracommandos” with missions similar to British Commandos or U.S. Rangers. The Indians also had several airborne infantry battalions organized into two brigades (50 and 51). The Pakistan Army had Special Service Group units for commando missions, but it had no true airborne infantry; the “Para” in 14 Para Brigade was only an honorary title.

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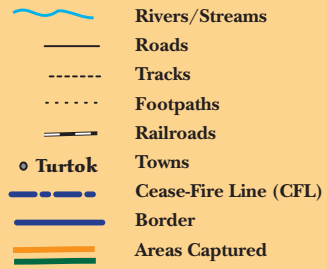
## ELEVATIONS



## Key to the Maps

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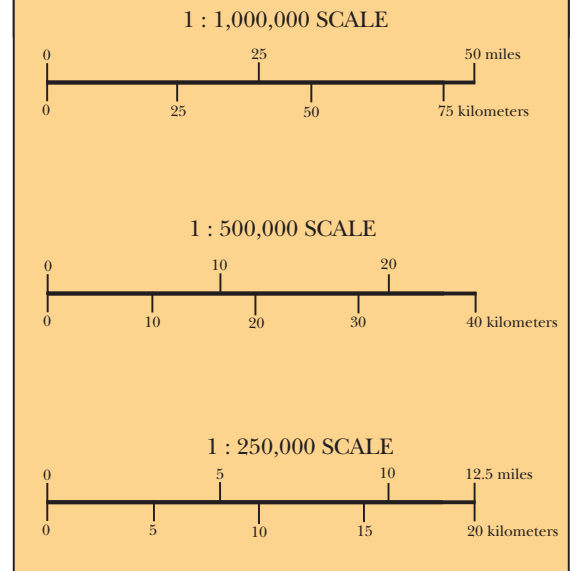
## FEATURES



## UNITS

	Pakistan	India
Battalion	elems 2 KKS	Ladakh Scouts
Brigade	26 <sub>12</sub>	93 <sub>25</sub>
Division	12	25
Armor	2	3

## SCALES



## Acknowledgements

This book began to take shape during the Kargil conflict in the summer of 1999 as I looked back to the past for a deeper understanding of contemporary events. Since that time, many people have supported me in the effort to put this slender volume in your hands. Among my Indian and Pakistani friends, I am very grateful to General Jehangir Karamat and Lieutenant General V. R. Raghavan for encouragement and good counsel, while Lieutenant General Kamal Matinuddin was kind enough to review the manuscript. Major Agha Humayun Amin, author of many articles on South Asian military history, provided useful details for the order of battle appendix. American friends have been equally helpful. Dr. Ashley J. Tellis has provided excellent advice, unflagging enthusiasm, and excellent food (especially desserts). Dr. Stephen P. Cohen of Brookings generously reviewed the manuscript at an early stage. The end product, of course, presents only my own conclusions, but I am very appreciative of their time and assistance.

Without the NESACenter, this project would not have been possible at all. Here I have to thank the Director, Ms. Alina Romanowski, and Ambassador Roger Harrison, the Academic Chair, for their vision and support. In particular, however, I want to express my deep sense of gratitude to Elizabeth Hopkins, Joe Cipriani and Jackie Johnstone who have been exemplary in their dedication, courtesy, competence, and professionalism.

Finally, I want to thank my patient wife, LTC Anne Rieman, and my sons, Grant and Hunter, for giving so much of their time that I might complete this work.

## Dedication

This is for my mother, Barbara Ann Gill (1927-2002), with love, admiration, and gratitude. Little words must here suffice to express the fullness of the heart.

# 1. Overview



The 1971 War was the international manifestation of the domestic political estrangement between the two halves of the Pakistani state. With little beyond a common religious belief and a deep distrust of India to bind them, these two halves slipped toward civil war as discontent in the eastern portion (now Bangladesh) grew into an autonomy movement during the late 1960s.<sup>2</sup> The breaking point came in March 1971, when the Bengalis (the ethnic group which constituted the vast majority of East Pakistan's population) were denied the fruits of their victory in December 1970 elections: the principal East Pakistani party, the Awami League, had won the majority of seats in the country's parliament, but the politically dominant West Pakistani leadership -- particularly the ambitious Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, head of the Pakistan People's Party -- had no desire to relinquish supremacy

and thus stalled on convening the National Assembly. Tension between the two sides reached unbearable levels as the law and order situation deteriorated. Last-minute attempts at negotiations foundered on the irreconcilable differences between Awami Party leader Sheikh Mujibur Rahman on the one side and the military government of West Pakistan under General Agha Mohammed Yahya Khan on the other.<sup>3</sup> The Pakistan Army, overwhelmingly drawn from the west, indulged in harsh repression in a misguided effort to control the situation through military force. Under a plan called "Operation Searchlight," West Pakistani troops endeavored to disarm Bengali elements of the armed forces, paramilitary, and police, while arresting hundreds of suspected separatists.<sup>4</sup> Predictably, the Bengalis retaliated and open rebellion broke out in the east. The rebels proclaimed the independence of "Bangladesh" on 26 March, and by early April a provisional government had come into existence at "Mujibnagar" in India.<sup>5</sup> The level of violence increased during the spring and summer of 1971, and, while Pakistani reinforcements were flown in from the west, hundreds of thousands of refugees began to pour into India, including thousands of former East Pakistani regular soldiers and paramilitary troops.<sup>6</sup>

The Pakistan Army managed to reestablish a degree of control over most of the cities and towns in the east by the end of May, but no viable political solution was forthcoming from Islamabad to exploit this momentary military success. As a result, the rebellion, or civil war as some participants termed it, slowly grew in intensity and scope during the monsoon months between May and October.

The civil conflict in East Pakistan presented a major challenge to Indian policy, particularly the enormous burden imposed by the millions of refugees who had arrived by midsummer. Beyond the strain on finances and social services, India was deeply concerned about the leftist elements within the Bengali separatist movement. Leftist rebels had conducted an especially vicious militant campaign in eastern India in the late 1960s and New Delhi had no desire to see that insurgency reignited by Bengali radicals or to see East Pakistan established as an independent state under the auspices of leftist extremists.<sup>7</sup> At the same time, the government had to contend with widespread sympathy for the Bengalis and the resultant outcry for intervention from opposition politicians and the public at large. Many Indians advocated exploiting Pakistan's predicament. One of these, K. Subrahmanyam, a leading commentator and director of the government-sponsored Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, urged military action to take advantage of what he called "an opportunity the like of which will never come again." Other important Indian writers promoted restraint, but Subrahmanyam's statements received wide publicity in Pakistan, deepening animosity and leaving a lasting impression.<sup>8</sup>

Domestic pressure notwithstanding, the initial Indian reaction was relatively cautious. Indian paramilitary Border Security Force (BSF) troops began providing low-level assistance to Bengali rebels (the Mukti Bahini or Liberation Force) in early April in the form of safe havens, training, and limited arms, but New Delhi chose not to recognize the Provisional Government of Bangladesh (declared on 17 April) and it did not authorize direct military action across the border. In a 29 April meeting, Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi apparently considered ordering a military advance, but Foreign Minister Swaran Singh counseled restraint and recommended holding military intervention in reserve in case "interim measures did not resolve the East Pakistan crisis" diplomatically.<sup>9</sup> Similarly, General S. H. F. J. "Sam" Manekshaw, the Chief of the Army Staff and simultaneously the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee, advised Gandhi that India's armed forces would need many months to prepare for conflict. Moreover, the imminent arrival of the monsoon would prevent major operations until November at the earliest.<sup>10</sup> Gandhi agreed to a delay, but ordered Manekshaw to plan for war as a policy option for the future. The Indian leadership thus seems to have hoped for a resolution short of open war in the intervening period

as long as the refugees departed and stability returned to the east either through a resolution that gave power to a moderate Awami League regime within the Pakistani state or through the creation of an independent Bangladesh.<sup>11</sup> From the spring, however, Gandhi began to lay the diplomatic and military foundation for the possibility of an armed contest: securing international support, increasing assistance to the Mukti Bahini, and boosting military readiness.

Pakistan also placed its military on a war footing during the summer and fall, transferring significant forces to the east (9 and 16 Divisions as well as several thousand paramilitary and police) and raising new units in the west to take their places (17 and 33 Divisions). The counterinsurgency campaign, however, was not going well for Pakistan. As the months passed, the Mukti Bahini improved with Indian assistance, while the Pakistani security forces, isolated amidst a hostile population, struggled with physical and mental exhaustion. Though relatively secure within their cantonments, they were unable to quell the unrest within East Pakistan, collect reliable intelligence, or execute unrealistic orders to “seal” the long, twisting border with India in what one commander characterized as an exercise in “quixotic dreaming.”<sup>12</sup> Eastern Command’s successes were local and transitory. The civil war became a cruel and seemingly endless cycle of raids, ambushes, bombings, sabotage, assassinations, and shellings. Pakistan could not eradicate the guerrillas, and the Mukti Bahini by themselves lacked the strength and coordination to force a Pakistani withdrawal.<sup>13</sup> Brutality was commonplace on both sides and the death toll climbed into the thousands.<sup>14</sup>

By November, the Indian Army and paramilitary troops were regularly providing artillery support to the Mukti Bahini and, toward the end of the month, the army had even made small incursions into East Pakistan in several locations. Cross-border raids and artillery exchanges by both sides became common.<sup>15</sup> Pakistan, whose strategy for defense of the east called for offensive in the west, therefore launched its air force against several targets in western India on the evening of 3 December 1971. That night, the Pakistan Army opened an offensive all along the Western Front from Punch in Kashmir to Longewala in the Rajasthan desert.

India had been preparing for Pakistan to make the first move and had drafted its plans accordingly.<sup>16</sup> Its principal focus was in the east, where it was hoped that a well-conceived offensive would crush Pakistani resistance quickly and result in the conclusive establishment of Bangladesh as an independent country. Unleashed, India’s Eastern Command overran East Pakistan in two weeks. Despite often spirited resistance, the Pakistani defenders were faced with an impossible strategic situation. Their commander, Lt. Gen. A. A. K. Niazi, therefore signed an instrument of surrender at 4:31 p.m. on 16 December and a cease-fire went into effect on both fronts at 8 p.m. the following day, leaving some 90,000 Pakistani prisoners of war and civilian detainees in Indian hands.<sup>17</sup>

In the west, the two armies sparred indecisively, each side’s small advances being balanced by the other side’s gains. The only exception was the dramatic drive by India’s 11th Division into the sandy wastes of Pakistan’s Sindh Province which netted India approximately 4,500 square kilometers of Pakistani territory, albeit barren desert.<sup>18</sup>

Pakistan’s military debacle naturally started a political upheaval that ended with Zulfikar Ali Bhutto coming to power as the truncated country’s new leader. After prolonged wrangling and some additional skirmishing (most notably in the Lipa valley in Kashmir in May), Bhutto and Gandhi signed the Simla Accord at the eponymous hill resort on 3 July 1972. Innumerable details remained unresolved, however, and the two sides did not come to an agreement on the redefinition of the Cease-Fire Line, from thenceforth to be called the Line of Control (LOC), in Kashmir until December 1972. The first exchange of prisoners also took place that month, but the last of them, held hostage to bitter political machinations, did not return home until April 1974.

## Strategies and Forces

Indian strategy in 1971 gave primacy to operations in East Pakistan. For decision makers in New Delhi, the aim of the war was to create conditions that would allow the refugees to return and would leave an Awami League government in power in Dacca. Early Indian plans thus focused on support to the Mukti Bahini and diplomatic efforts to bring about a political resolution to the crisis. By the autumn, however, when it became clear that neither diplomacy nor insurgency would suffice to achieve India's objectives, preparations for a military invasion of East Pakistan were accelerated, including seizure of enclaves along the frontier.<sup>19</sup> The focus on the east dictated that the war in the west would be a defensive holding action. No ground was to be lost, especially in Kashmir, and offensive operations were authorized where feasible to gain advantages for use at the negotiating table or to preempt a Pakistani advance, but the war would be won or lost in the east; Prime Minister Gandhi rejected suggestions that the conflict be prolonged to permit the conquest of major areas in West Pakistan or the destruction of the Pakistan Army.<sup>20</sup> The time element was also key to Indian planning. Based on the assumption that only a few weeks would be available before foreign pressure brought the war to a halt, Indian plans stressed the need for a quick invasion that could deliver decisive results before the international community could intervene in any significant manner. Finally, the Indian military was to ensure the security of the border with China. Although the political leadership was confident that Beijing would not intervene with armed force, the Indian commanders had to include China in their planning. Indeed, one reason operations were delayed until November or December at the earliest was to allow winter snow to close the passes leading from Tibet into India.<sup>21</sup>

Pakistan's strategy was almost the exact opposite of India's. Recognizing the near-impossibility of successfully holding its eastern half against a determined Indian onslaught, Pakistani strategy was predicated on the conviction that the east would have to be defended in the west. In practical terms, this axiom meant that Pakistan would launch a major offensive into India from the west at the start of any conflict. By threatening vital Indian assets such as Kashmir and the Punjab, Pakistani planners hoped to draw Indian forces away from the east and gain enough time for outside powers to restrain New Delhi. In the meantime, Pakistan's Eastern Command, isolated and effectively surrounded, would have to hold on as best it could. Pakistan also hoped for a short war. First, because of the difficulty in defending the east for any extended period of time against a determined foe, and second because the military services, especially the army, were desperately short of the replacement equipment and reserve manpower necessary for a lengthy conflict.<sup>22</sup> Contrary to India's fairly realistic appraisal of the likelihood of international intervention, many Pakistani officers hopefully assumed that China, and possibly others, would play an active combat role if the situation escalated to war.<sup>23</sup>

The forces available to the two sides to execute their strategies were among the largest in the world at the time. India's Army of 833,800 men could field fourteen infantry divisions, ten mountain divisions, and two parachute brigades as well as an armored division and four independent armored brigades. Key items of combat equipment included more than 1,450 tanks and 3,000 artillery pieces. Beyond first-line troops, India enjoyed a considerable advantage in reserves of personnel and equipment over Pakistan; it thus had a substantial ability to endure losses and to continue a conflict longer than its adversary. At 365,000 men, the Pakistan Army was about half the size of its Indian counterpart, but was nonetheless a formidable force with two armored divisions, thirteen infantry divisions and three independent armored brigades with approximately 850 tanks and 800 guns. Two of these infantry divisions (17 and 33), however, were still being organized and suffered from the numerous difficulties attendant upon construction of military formations. Three divisions were in East Pakistan, the original garrison (14 Division) having been joined in March/

April by 9 and 16 Divisions (albeit minus much of their equipment). General Niazi organized two additional infantry divisions in the east (36 and 39), but these were divisions in name only, a futile attempt to make the Eastern Command appear more powerful than it was. In fact, each was hardly more than brigade strength, lacking staff, supporting arms, and equipment of every sort. It is noteworthy that both armies relied heavily on foot-mobile infantry divisions, having only limited capability to conduct mechanized warfare despite the large overall size of the ground forces. Both sides supplemented their regular troops with extraordinarily large paramilitary establishments (some 280,000 in Pakistan's case, for example), but, as with regular units, India had a significant numerical advantage in paramilitary forces. Pakistan also attempted to form a considerable body of hastily assembled militia and home guard units for rear area duties and counterinsurgency missions, especially in East Pakistan. The results, however, were disappointing and many of these units in both wings proved unreliable unless backed by regulars.<sup>24</sup>

The air arms of both countries were commensurately large. The Indian Air Force (IAF) with some 625 combat aircraft and over 450 transport and support planes outnumbered the 273 fighters and bombers in the Pakistan Air Force (PAF). Moreover, the IAF had improved in quality since its controversial showing during the 1965 war.

The Indian Navy had also grown since 1965. By 1971, it was not only one of the few navies in the world to feature an aircraft carrier (INS Vikrant) in its order of battle, it also included 21 other major surface combatants, four submarines, and a number of patrol boats that would play an interesting role in the war. Pakistan's Navy also had four submarines, but its surface fleet counted only eight major combatants and a few patrol boats.

Although India enjoyed a significant quantitative superiority in numbers of soldiers and equipment, the two militaries were fairly equal in qualitative categories such as maintenance, logistics, training, and leadership as they entered the war. With respect to command and control, however, Pakistan suffered from serious problems. On taking over as President and Chief Martial Law Administrator in early 1969, General Yahya Khan had retained his previous position as Commander in Chief of the Army. He thus placed himself at the pinnacle of a tangled bureaucratic structure with responsibility for domestic and foreign policy as well as army issues and the operational direction of all three services in combat. The burden proved too great. Furthermore, he exacerbated this confused situation by filling the staff of the Martial Law Administration with military officers (mostly Army) and appointing serving officers to key positions in the country's governmental structure. The requirements of administering the martial law regime not only distracted the armed forces from their primary missions, they also created an atmosphere in which lines of command and authority were blurred and uncertain, slowing reaction time and fostering confusion.<sup>25</sup> Joint operations among the three Services, ground, air, and sea, were another weak point for Pakistan's command and control system. In the words of the official postwar analysis "there was an utter lack of joint planning by the three services," so that the Pakistanis were not able to generate the synergy inherent in multi-service operations on a consistent basis.<sup>26</sup>

Pakistan's command problems were compounded by poor communications between the different headquarters in the eastern and western wings. While General Niazi created misleading impressions by submitting rosy appreciations of the deteriorating situation in the east, his superiors in Rawalpindi did not always keep him apprised of plans at the national level. Senior officers in Dacca "had no prior knowledge of the start of the war, nor of the developments on the ground and in the air" on 3 December. Similarly, the Commander in Chief of the Pakistan Navy and other senior officials apparently only learned of the attack on India from news broadcasts.<sup>27</sup>

The Indian Army, Air Force, and Navy also experienced problems in coordinating their actions, especially in the west, but the overall level of joint cooperation was much higher. In the eastern

theater in particular, the three services worked together quite effectively, largely as a result of the senior leaders' personalities and professionalism. Nonetheless, as an Indian division commander during the war has observed that "there were flaws which might have caused serious danger under other circumstances."<sup>28</sup>



## 2. The Eastern Front



### 1971 War Eastern Front Overview

1: 5,000,000

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Dispositions of division-size elements as of 3 December 1971:

	Pakistan	India
Infantry	9	23

Note: units marked with an asterisk are brigade-size.  
 SFF = Special Frontier Force (brigade-size)  
 101 = 101 Communication Zone (division-size)

= Areas captured by India/Mukti Bahini prior to 3 December (approximate).

0 100 200 kilometers

0 100 200 miles

East Pakistan presented an extraordinarily challenging theater of operations for both sides. Marshes, rice paddies, and innumerable small lakes and watercourses made movement difficult and effectively prohibited major military operations during the monsoon (approximately May to

late September). The region's transportation infrastructure was very weak in 1971, with few all-weather roads capable of accepting heavy military traffic and even fewer railroads. Moreover, the larger rivers broke the country into four principal zones: northwest, southwest, center, and east. These sectors were connected by only two railroad bridges: the Hardinge Bridge across the Padma (Ganges) linking the southwest and the northwest, and a bridge at Ashuganj across the Meghna River to tie the east and central zones together. With the exception of these two bridges, neither of which was decked for vehicular traffic, movement across the Padma, Jamuna, and Meghna could only be accomplished by water or by air.

For Pakistan's planners, the situation in the east was enormously daunting. General Niazi's Eastern Command was surrounded on its three land sides by the numerically superior Indian Army, its sea flank was dominated by the Indian Navy, and its limited air cover was unlikely to endure beyond the first few days of action. No substantial reinforcements could be expected once war began. Moreover, movement, security, and intelligence collection inside East Pakistan were badly hampered by the activities of the Mukti Bahini. Guerrilla actions, insufficient logistical support, and the pervading sense of isolation also contributed to the psychological exhaustion of the Pakistani troops and commanders. Describing the mental state of the troops, a division commander commented that their "minds were clogged by an incomprehensible conflict."<sup>29</sup> Similarly, a brigade commander in 14 Division recorded that 3 December found his men were already "very near exhaustion" and burdened by "terrible fatigue and sleeplessness."<sup>30</sup> Growing distrust of their Bengali comrades in arms exacerbated the anxiety and uncertainty among the West Pakistani soldiers.<sup>31</sup>

The forces available were inadequate to cope with these pressing external and internal threats. General Niazi had only three regular infantry divisions in Eastern Command, and two of these lacked their full complement of artillery, vehicles, and signals equipment.<sup>32</sup> Only one armored regiment (29 Cavalry) was on hand and its tanks were mostly World War II vintage American M-24 Chaffees supplemented by a handful of Russian PT-76s captured from India during the 1965 war. Two additional "ad hoc" division headquarters (36 and 39) and several brigades were created during the autumn of 1971 in an effort to deceive Indian intelligence, but these were cobbled together hastily from existing resources and did little to improve command and control.<sup>33</sup> The problems experienced by these units led one Pakistani commentator to describe 36 Division as "a hoax...a patchwork of a formation put on crutches."<sup>34</sup> The other services were equally threadbare. The Pakistan Air Force presence was limited to one squadron (No. 14) of 16 Sabre VIs and three RT-33s. The Pakistan Navy in the east was capable of some riverine operations, but with only four patrol craft and some two dozen improvised or confiscated river vessels, it could hardly challenge the Indian Navy, especially in the absence of air cover. Curiously, Niazi did not have formal authority over the air and navy components of the force in East Pakistan; they were simply expected to cooperate with him in his guise as Commander, Eastern Command. Under such circumstances, it is perhaps not surprising that one Pakistani general later commented, "the defeat in East Pakistan was inevitable."<sup>35</sup>

General Niazi's plans for the defense of the east were formulated in July 1971 and approved by Army headquarters the following month. The primary aim was to prevent the Mukti Bahini and the Indians from seizing a parcel of East Pakistan from which an independent state of Bangladesh could be declared. Associated with this strategic aim was the key assumption that India would not launch a full-scale attack in the east, but would limit its actions to steadily increasing support for the Mukti Bahini. Niazi's general concept therefore called for a "forward posture of defense" along the borders to prevent incursions, with the army falling back to so-called "strong points" and "fortresses" if necessary. If the Indians invaded, the army would supposedly fall back slowly and



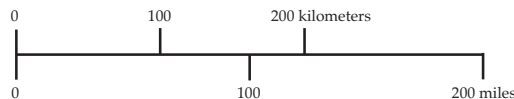
endeavor to hold out in these fortresses as long as possible to allow the offensive in the west to take effect. There were several serious flaws in this concept. In the first place, the cordon defense along the frontier was brittle because there were insufficient troops to defend the entire border while trying to prosecute the counterinsurgency war. Second, Eastern Command had practically no reserves, making the strong point defense a questionable proposition. Moreover, with limited mobility and faced with a hostile population in difficult riverine terrain, there was at best small likelihood that



## 1971 War

### Mukti Bahini Operational Sectors

Sectors and commanders as of December 1971: **1/ Capt. Rafiq**  
 from <http://bangladeshonline.com/liberationwar>



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1: 5,000,000

the forward Pakistani troops would be able to withdraw to the fortresses intact. Niazi compounded the withdrawal problem by decreeing that no unit could pull back until it had suffered at least 75% casualties. Third, no regular troops were left to defend Dhaka, even though the planners recognized that the capital was the nerve center of East Pakistan with enormous symbolic importance. One Pakistani veteran has summarized the problem concisely as "Pakistan fought the war in East Pakistan with a troop deployment designed for internal security operations."<sup>36</sup> The most curious

aspect of the plan, however, was Niazi's desire, with which Army General Headquarters initially concurred, to launch offensive operations into India at several points. A subsequent Pakistani commentator regarded this proposal as "sheer folly."<sup>37</sup>

Across the border was India's Eastern Command, under Lieutenant General Jagjit Singh Aurora. The orders issued to Aurora instructed him to destroy the bulk of the Pakistani forces in the east and to occupy most of East Pakistan.<sup>38</sup> These two objectives seem to have been allotted equal priority by Army headquarters and Aurora addressed them by preparing plans to seize territory up to the lines of the major rivers through offensives in the southwestern, northwestern, and eastern sectors. One corps was allotted to each of these sectors: II Corps in the southwest, XXXIII Corps in the northwest, and IV Corps in the east. Indian offensive operations in the east were to begin in the first week of December, and New Delhi was thus both pleased and relieved when the Pakistani air strikes on the afternoon of 3 December (and ground attacks that night) came in advance of the planned advance.<sup>39</sup>

Notably absent from the Indian plans was any formal reference to Dacca. Army planners thought it would be impossible to secure the city within the time frame of a short war. As a result, the best approach to the East Pakistani capital, the central or northern sector, was initially assigned only one regular brigade under an ad hoc headquarters called 101 Communications Zone Area. Nonetheless, several senior Indian generals certainly had their eyes on the city. Verbal coordination between Major General Gurbax Singh Gill, commander of 101 Communications Zone, and the Chief of Staff at Eastern Command, Major General J. F. R. Jacob, led to an outline plan for a possible advance on Dacca including a parachute drop at Tangail in battalion strength.<sup>40</sup> Likewise, Lieutenant General Sagat Singh, commanding IV Corps, clearly intended to head for Dacca if the opportunity arose even though this was not part of his written orders.<sup>41</sup> More than Dacca, the possibility that Pakistani forces would escape by sea had been on General Manekshaw's mind in New Delhi. The Indian Navy, however, promised to deny Pakistan the use of Chittagong and Chalna, reducing his concern for this eventuality. He would later come to worry about the potential for an overland withdrawal into Burma.

With six full divisions (plus parts of 6 Mountain Division), four additional brigades, and the equivalent of three armored regiments, India's Eastern Command decidedly outnumbered General Niazi's defenders. Several additional brigades and the headquarters of 6 Mountain Division would be added to this imposing force as the war progressed and the likelihood of Chinese intervention diminished. Although the mountain divisions composing Eastern Command had few vehicles, a squadron of approximately 12 operational Mi-4 helicopters was available to enhance mobility and there were sufficient transport aircraft to airdrop up to a battalion of 50 Para Brigade at any one time. In combat aircraft, the IAF contributed 11 fighter squadrons and one squadron of Canberra bombers to the offensive in the east.<sup>42</sup> The Indian Navy's principal surface combatant, the light carrier INS Vikrant, with her task force would seal the coast and support inland operations with air strikes and naval gunfire.

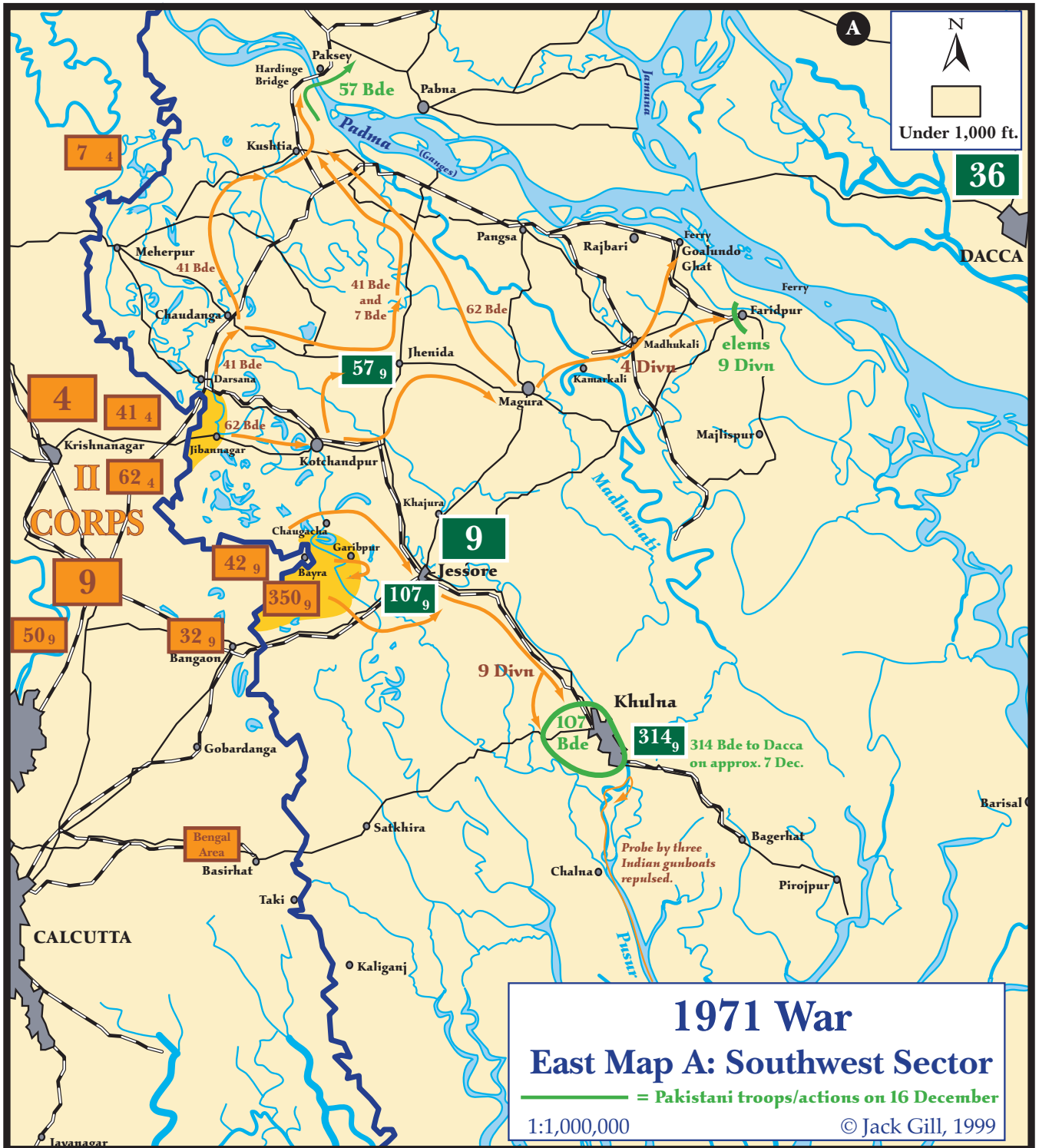
The various Mukti Bahini groups multiplied the strength of India's armed forces. Some of these groups had been formed from men with experience in the Pakistan Army or with various Pakistani paramilitary organizations. During most of the rebellion, the Mukti Bahini guerrillas operated in geographically defined "sectors." As open war approached, however, some of these troops were assembled into three brigade-sized groupings called "forces." Designated "Zulu," "Kilo," and "Sierra" according to the initials of their commanders, they provided a total of eight infantry battalions (East Bengal Regiment) and three artillery batteries under the overall command of India's IV Corps.<sup>43</sup> These "forces" were capable of limited conventional operations in cooperation with the Indian Army, and were closely intermingled with Indian units during the actual fighting.<sup>44</sup> Although some battalions were attached to Indian brigades individually, Sierra Force and Kilo

Force essentially functioned as subordinate brigades under Indian divisions for much of the war.

Other Bangladeshi groups constituted "Freedom Fighters" who operated deep within East Pakistan as guerrillas and political cadres. Although the Freedom Fighters seldom inflicted heavy losses on the Pakistani regulars, they represented a ubiquitous menace, constantly harassing their opponents with ambushes, raids, sabotage, and propaganda. Their activities exhausted the Pakistani troops while creating an enervating sense of constant uncertainty and danger. They also supplied Indian authorities with invaluable intelligence information. By November 1971, some 100,000 Bengalis could claim membership in these varied elements of the Mukti Bahini, and half of them were already operating inside East Pakistan.

## Bangladesh: Southwest Sector<sup>45</sup>

Cut up with innumerable water obstacles, the southwestern corner of East Pakistan offered many advantages to the defender. The Pakistani force assigned to this sector, however, was inadequate to its mission. With only nine regular infantry battalions, 9 Infantry Division could hardly cover its assigned terrain. Of its two brigades, 107 Brigade had to protect the immense frontier from



Satkhira to Kotchandpur, while 57 Brigade held the sector from the latter town north to the Padma. Moreover, 9 Division's commander, Major General M. H. Ansari, proved incapable of providing the determined, imaginative leadership necessary to compensate for his formation's numerical inferiority. An additional formation, the ad hoc 314 Brigade of paramilitary troops, was initially formed a Khulna, but moved to Dacca by boat on approximately 7 December.

On the Indian side, the newly raised II Corps consisted of 4 Mountain Division and 9 Infantry Division (the only infantry division in the east, it had more motor vehicles and heavier artillery than its mountain counterparts); the corps was later reinforced by 50 Parachute Brigade (minus one battalion). Under Lieutenant General Tapishwar Narain "Tappy" Raina, the 20 infantry battalions of II Corps were to take Khulna, Jessore, Goalundo Ghat, Faridpur, and the Hardinge Bridge. Convinced that Khulna was one of the keys to East Pakistan, General Manekshaw placed especial stress on its capture. Dacca was not mentioned except in some contingency plans for crossing the Padma (Ganges) at Faridpur and Goalundo Ghat. Paying little attention to possible operations against the chief city of East Pakistan, therefore, Raina planned to advance on two axes with 4 Division in the north towards Jhenida and 9 Division aiming for Jessore on the southern approach.

Operations by Indian troops and Mukti Bahini during late November had secured a sizable enclave between Bayra and Jessore. An Indian success at Garibpur on 21/22 November was particularly significant, as it allowed Indian 9 Division to gain considerable ground towards Jessore and resulted in the virtual destruction of the lone Pakistani armored squadron in the area.<sup>46</sup> The action at Garibpur, however, also alerted the Pakistanis to Indian 9 Division's proposed line of advance. As a result, the division quickly became embroiled in a tough and costly slogging match on 4 and 5 December once the full-scale conflict broke out. This fight took its toll on the Pakistanis too, however, and the exhausted 107 Brigade abandoned Jessore on the night of 6/7 December, withdrawing south to Khulna in considerable confusion.<sup>47</sup> The Pakistani division headquarters and other remnants fled east toward the Madhumati River. A Pakistani officer recalled that "The front here had crumbled completely...Withdrawal quickly turned into a rout." Riding into Jessore in the dawn hours of 7 December, he noted, "It looked like a ghost town, except for sleepy dogs and chickens, not a soul stirred. Doors were wide open, all kinds of personal belongings littered the roads ... It looked like the end of East Pakistan."<sup>48</sup> The Indians occupied Jessore later that day, but Major General Dalbir Singh, the 9 Division commander, allowed himself to be distracted by Khulna and turned his entire division toward an objective that was supposed to be taken by a brigade. The town held out stoutly for the remainder of the war in the face of repeated attacks.<sup>49</sup>

The Indian Navy was also involved in the fighting around Khulna. A small task group of one Indian Navy patrol boat and two Mukti Bahini boats called "Force Alpha" steamed towards Khulna from Chalna on 9/10 December. Pakistani fire, however, and tragically accurate air strikes by Indian Air Force fighters disabled two of the boats and forced the other to withdraw without contributing much to the advance.<sup>50</sup>

The 9 Division's reserve force, 50 Para Brigade, engaged in a brief skirmish at Khajura north of Jessore on 8 December before being pulled out the next day for transfer to the western front.<sup>51</sup> A planned two-company airborne attack by 8 Para near Jhenida was called off as unnecessary.

The "Red Eagles," Indian 4 Division, launched a well-conducted attack north and east from its positions around Jibannagar, skillfully bypassing or overwhelming resistance to enter Jhenida on 7 December. Like 9 Division, however, the leadership of the 4th was distracted by a flank objective. In this case, when a hasty attempt to capture Kushtia and the Hardinge Bridge miscarried, the senior commanders overreacted and diverted the entire division to the north.<sup>52</sup> Although the Indian advance helped urge Pakistan's 57 Brigade in its retreat across the Ganges, by the time 4 Division had returned to the Magura area (14 December), it was too late to participate in the drive

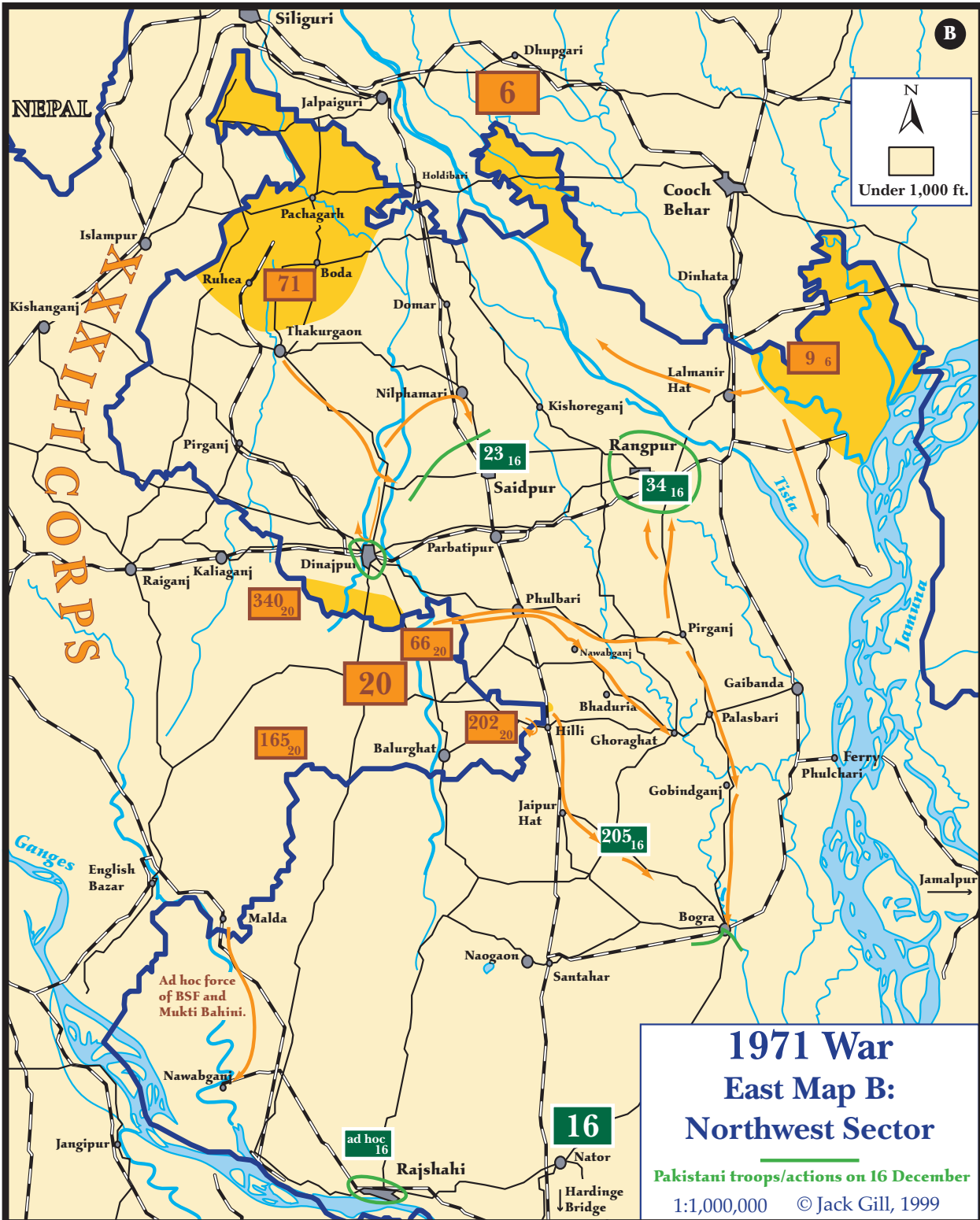


for Dacca. The division made a fine crossing of the Madhumati (albeit against light resistance) and took the surrender of the broken remnants of Pakistani 9 Division at Faridpur on 16 December.<sup>53</sup>

Indian Army and BSF troops from Bengal Area under Major General P. Chowdry made limited gains on the Satkhira axis.<sup>54</sup>

**Bangladesh: Northwest Sector**

Somewhat drier than the other operational areas in East Pakistan, the northwest sector offered better terrain for mechanized forces and the possibility of fairly rapid movement. Consequently, both sides allotted the bulk of their armored units to this sector (Pakistani 29 Cavalry; Indian 63 and 69 Armored Regiments, as well as 20 Maratha Light Infantry in SKOT armored personnel carriers)



and tanks played an important role in the success of India's 340 Mountain Brigade. Pakistan's 16 Division had the task to defend the northwest, but its commander, Major General Nazir Hussain Shah, dissipated his strength by creating ad hoc commands and haphazardly mixing troops from various units. The result was a reduction in cohesion and morale.

On the Indian side, XXXIII Corps under Lieutenant General Mohan L. Thapan controlled 6 and 20 Mountain Divisions and 71 Mountain Brigade. While fighting the war to the south, however, the corps also had to look north and retained command of 17 and 27 Mountain Divisions on the Tibetan frontier. Furthermore, Thapan could not commit 6 Mountain Division without permission from New Delhi as it was to be held ready to move to the Bhutanese border in case China intervened in the war.

As elsewhere along the border, Indian forces in support of the Mukti Bahini made significant inroads into East Pakistan prior to 3 December. Most notable was Brigadier Pran Nath Kathpalia's 71 Mountain Brigade, which had pushed to the outskirts of Thakurgaon by the eve of war.<sup>55</sup> Efforts to capture the heavily fortified border village of Hilli, however, failed repeatedly in a struggle that raged off and on from 24 November to 11 December. Resolutely defended by Pakistani 4 Frontier Force, Hilli blocked the proposed advance of 20 Division across the narrow "waist" of this sector.<sup>56</sup> After heavy losses in front of Hilli, the Indian division solved this problem by swinging around to the north and unleashing 340 Brigade under Brigadier Joginder Singh Bakshi. Bakshi moved swiftly to control the main north-south road, unhinging the defense of Hilli, splitting Pakistani 16 Division, and opening the way to Bogra, which town he effectively controlled by war's end. The Pakistani division, despite continued resistance by isolated units, had ceased to exist as a coherent combat formation. Indicative of the chaotic situation, General Shah and the commander of 205 Brigade, Brigadier Tajammul Hussain Malik, were almost captured when Indian forces ambushed their convoy on 7 December. On the other hand, a last-minute Indian move north by 66 and 202 Brigades to capture Rangpur proved unsuccessful.

In secondary actions, 9 Mountain Brigade secured most of the area north of the Tista River and an ad hoc command of Indian BSF and Mukti Bahini under Brigadier Prem Singh pushed out of Malda to capture Nawabganj in the extreme southeastern corner of the sector.

Despite Bakshi's performance and the generally successful advance of 71 Brigade, much of XXXIII Corps' offensive power was allowed to lie idle far too long and Pakistani troops still held the major towns of the sector (Rangpur, Saidpur, Dinajpur, Nator, Rajshahi) when the cease-fire was announced.<sup>57</sup> Likewise, the cease-fire intervened before the Indians could implement a hastily conceived plan to transfer 340 Brigade, a tank squadron, and an artillery battery across the Jamuna via the Phulchari ferry to take part in the advance on Dacca. With the exception of this squadron, all armor was preparing to transfer to the west by the end of the war.

## Bangladesh: Northern and Eastern Sectors

The crucial Indian offensive actions were those undertaken in the Northern and Eastern Sectors. As elsewhere, the innumerable water obstacles and poor infrastructure here presented daunting



challenges to maneuver and logistics, but 101 Communications Zone in the north and IV Corps in the east overcame these hurdles to cut through the defenders and isolate Dacca, leaving Niazi little choice but surrender.

The combat in these two sectors generally falls into two phases. From 3 to 9 December, Indian and Bangladeshi troops broke through the crust of the Pakistani defenses in a series of border battles and established themselves on the banks of the major rivers in each area. The second phase, from 10 to 16 December, was a race to Dacca against increasingly fragmented and dispirited resistance, with the lead Indian elements finally coming to a halt within miles of the city just before the cease-fire.<sup>58</sup>

In the north, India's 101 Communications Zone, an administrative headquarters forced into service as a combat command, spent three weeks from 14 November to 4 December battering itself against the stubborn resistance of a small Pakistani border post at Kamalpur. When the outnumbered band of Pakistani defenders (from 31 Baloch) finally ran out of food and ammunition, however, the road to the south was open and 95 Brigade pushed on to Jamalpur. The reduction of this well-defended town consumed several more days, but by the 11th it was in Indian hands and 31 Baloch, half of the regular Pakistani force in this sector, was no longer an effective fighting force.<sup>59</sup> The same day, Indian troops of "FJ Sector" entered Mymensingh unopposed.<sup>60</sup> The stage was set for the drive on Dacca.

In the east, Indian IV Corps, with all eight East Bengal Regiment battalions, had made small gains in the last weeks of November. An enclave south of Akaura served as a springboard for 57 Division, which advanced along the rail line to Ashuganj.<sup>61</sup> In seesaw fighting that featured several successful Pakistani counterattacks, 27 Brigade of Pakistani 14 Division fell back across the Meghna and destroyed part of the rail bridge, blocking immediate passage of the river. General Sagat Singh, however, saw Dacca as "the final answer" and decided "to go beyond my assigned task."<sup>62</sup> In an impressive display of improvisation, IV Corps began crossing the broad Meghna on 9 December in a hastily assembled helicopter lift operation supplemented by every variety of local water craft.<sup>63</sup> Pakistan's 14 Division was no longer a hindrance as its 27 Brigade had retired to Bhairab Bazar and its other two brigades (202 and 313) were isolated at Sylhet.<sup>64</sup>

Further south, Indian 23 Division also reached the Meghna on 9 December, seizing both Daudkandi and Chandpur against light resistance. The isolated Pakistani force at Laksham capitulated the same day, leaving only the garrison of Mayanmati to offer organized resistance east of the Meghna. Pakistan 39 Division had disintegrated.<sup>65</sup> A sense of imminent victory drove the Indians, and, as 57 Division painfully built up its strength west of the river, 23 Division (shedding 83 Brigade and "Kilo Force" to push toward Chittagong), prepared to make its own improvised crossing. In another colorful, tenuous helicopter and boat operation, 301 Brigade landed at Baidya Bazar on 14 December and closed on the Lakhya the following day. "Like the Mughal army of yore," recalled the brigade commander, "we marched northwards helped and surrounded by civilians."<sup>66</sup> India's 57 Division was also advancing: 311 Brigade and "Sierra Force" were threatening Demra and 73 Brigade had reached the Balu east of Tungi. General Sagat Singh's decision to "go beyond his assigned task" had paid off.

The Indians were also approaching Dacca from the northwest, hindered more by severe logistics constraints than by the near-nonexistent Pakistani opposition. Indeed, Pakistani 93 Brigade, over the protest of its commander, had been withdrawn toward Dacca in a desperate attempt to shield the unprotected capital against the Indian troops advancing rapidly from the east and northeast.<sup>67</sup>

The Indian airborne drop of 2 Para at Tangail on 11 December accentuated the menace to Dacca. Although 2 Para's appearance made only a marginal contribution to the tactical battle, it helped to unnerve Niazi and others in Eastern Command headquarters, already anxious because of the lack

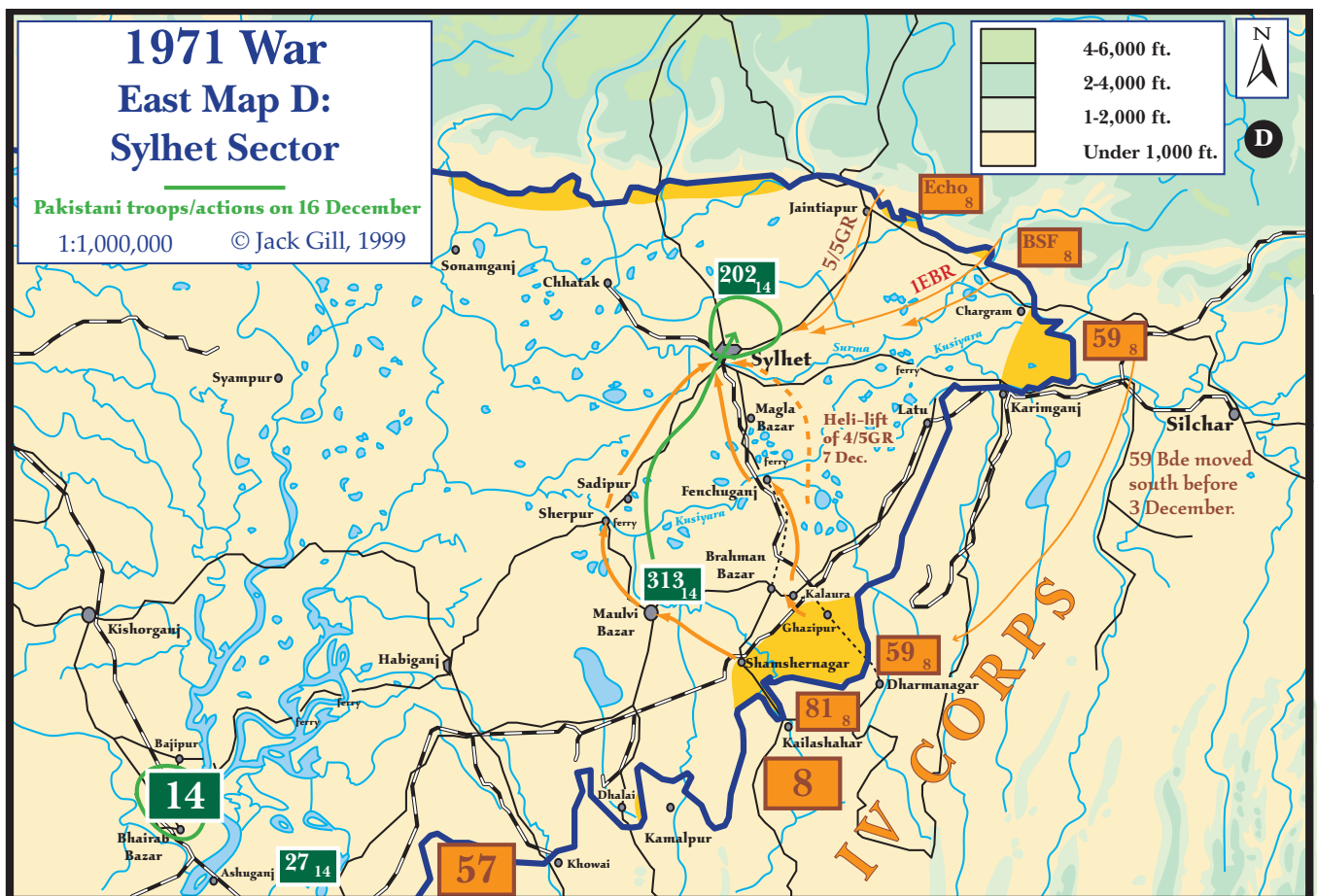
of regular combat troops in the capital.<sup>68</sup> Predations of the local Mukti Bahini under Qadir "Tiger" Siddiqi compounded Pakistan's woes, disrupting movements and depleting morale. The Indian paratroopers joined hands with 95 Brigade on 12 December and, with 167 Brigade hastening up from Jamalpur, soon reached and crossed the Turag.<sup>69</sup>

By 15 December, the Pakistani situation around Dacca was hopeless: the lone brigade of 36 Division was broken, the newly arrived 314 Brigade was little more than a paper organization, 14 Division was sitting demoralized and useless at Bhairab Bazar, and 39 Division had ceased to exist. On the morning of 16 December, Major General Mohammed Jamshed Khan drove out of Dacca to arrange the cease-fire.<sup>70</sup>

## Bangladesh: Sylhet Sector

The Sylhet area, surrounded on three sides by Indian territory was painfully vulnerable to attack. With only two weak brigades (202 and 313 of 14 Division) to cover the long, twisting border, the prospects for a successful defense were dim. As in other areas, there were not enough troops for the task at hand: "motley detachments of East Pakistan Rifles, Mujahids, Razakars, and Civil Armed Forces (from West Pakistan) were thrown in to support totally inadequate regular Pakistan Army units to fight in penny packets over vastly extended distances."<sup>71</sup> The newly raised 202 Brigade, for example, had to cover some 61 miles of the frontier with only one regular battalion (31 Punjab), some paramilitary troops, and five guns.<sup>72</sup> India's 8 Mountain Division and the three Bangladesh battalions of "Z Force" exacerbated the Pakistani defensive problem by leading the Pakistani generals to believe that the principal advance would come from the north and east between Jaintiapur and Karimganj. As a result, most of 202 Brigade was deployed along the arc between these two localities and the two regular battalions of Pakistani 313 Brigade were in no position to repel 8 Division's two-brigade attack when the Indians struck from an unexpected direction.

Despite a costly setback at Dhalai (also Dhullai), the Indians had secured significant terrain before 3 December, especially in the Karimganj salient and between Shamshearnagar and Kalaura.<sup>73</sup> Indian 59 Mountain Brigade, which had cleared the Karimganj area, shifted south to Dharmanagar and constituted the northern arm of the 8 Mountain Division attack, while 81 Mountain Brigade pushed from Shamshearnagar toward Maulvi Bazar on the southern axis. Pakistani 313 Brigade offered spirited resistance, but, badly reduced by the earlier fighting, it could not hold long. By 7 December, Indian troops in the south were advancing on Fenchuganj and had reached the defenses outside



Maulvi Bazar. Operations seemed to be progressing satisfactorily, and the corps commander, having learned that Sylhet was weakly held and fearing that Pakistani troops would slip south to reinforce the defenses around Dacca, jumped 4/5 Gorkha Rifles to Sylhet by helicopter. Expecting that "Echo Sector" would effect a quick link up with the Gorkhas, however, he simultaneously withdrew the rest of 59 Brigade to Kailashahar to prepare to reinforce 57 Mountain Division. The Gorkha battalion established a foothold against near nonexistent resistance, but Brigadier M. B. Wadke's "Echo Sector" was held up just south of Jaintiapur and Sagat Singh had to send 59 Brigade hurrying back up to Fenchuganj. The Gorkhas thus found themselves in trouble. By 14 December, however, the brigade had reached the southern side of Sylhet and established contact with the Gorkhas. The same day, 81 Brigade troops and 9 Guards of 59 Brigade, captured the Sylhet railroad station from the southwest. From the northeast, 5/5 Gorkha Rifles were within two miles of Sylhet by the 15th along the Jaintiapur road. The town was also under pressure by 1 East Bengal Rifles commanded by Major Ziaur Rahman, a future president of Bangladesh. Finally, 87 BSF was approaching from the east.

While the Indians were advancing, the Pakistanis suffered from command problems. Through a series of confused decisions, 313 Brigade withdrew towards Sylhet to be uselessly encircled instead of withdrawing toward Ashuganj where it might have helped slow the Indian advance.<sup>74</sup> As a result, both Pakistani brigades remained trapped in this remote town until they surrendered on 16 December.<sup>75</sup>



### **Bangladesh: Chittagong Sector**

This remote sector was remarkable for two reasons: the extensive operations by India's Special Frontier Force (SFF) and the only amphibious operation of the war.

Although General Manekshaw initially placed great emphasis on Chittagong as a possible ingress port for Pakistani reinforcements or escape route for a Pakistani evacuation, the only Indian conventional unit dedicated to this area in early planning was "Kilo Force," a mix of Indian regular and paramilitary troops supported by Mukti Bahini.<sup>76</sup> This force captured Feni and pushed down the coast toward Chittagong, reaching Sitakund by 12 December. Here it was joined by 83 Brigade, diverted south from 23 Division after the fall of Laksham. The two brigades had advanced as far as Faujdahat by 15 December and accepted the surrender of the Chittagong garrison the next day. The Pakistani 91 and 97 Brigades played almost no substantial role in the fighting.<sup>77</sup>

Operating from four bases in India (Marpara, Demagiri, Bornapansuri, and Jarulchari), the SFF conducted successful offensive operations in the central area of the Chittagong Hill Tracts against Pakistani troops and anti-Indian Mizo tribal guerrillas supported by Pakistan. Its most spectacular accomplishments were the destruction of the Dohazari bridge over the Sangu River and the capture of Rangamati. Thoroughly pleased with this little victory, the SFF commander, Brig. S. S. Uban, transferred his headquarters from Demagiri to Rangamati. Though peripheral to the battles taking place further north, Uban and his men displayed determination and resourcefulness in achieving considerable success in a challenging campaign with minimal logistical support.<sup>78</sup>

Uban's men attacked the Dohazari bridge because Manekshaw held the baseless fear that Pakistani troops would escape south into Burma along the old "Arakan Road." This concern also motivated him to order an amphibious assault south of Cox's Bazar toward the end of the war under a plan named Operation Beaver. It quickly became a pet project, which no amount of earnest staff advice could scuttle. With almost no planning or reconnaissance, therefore, 1/3 Gorkha Rifles and some other troops from Bengal Area Command were loaded aboard two Navy landing craft as "Romeo Force" and dispatched across the Bay of Bengal. Predictably, the attempt to land on 14 December failed. A handful of Gorkhas got ashore, but two men drowned when they disembarked in water seven to nine feet deep. Nonetheless, a platoon eventually landed and sent out a patrol that made its way north to Cox's Bazar and confirmed that there were no Pakistanis in the vicinity. The cease-fire came into effect before the bulk of the men could get ashore, which they did at Cox's Bazar from 16 to 18 December using local lighters.<sup>79</sup>



**1971 War**  
**East Map E:**  
**Chittagong Sector**  
 Pakistani troops ———  
 on 16 December  
 SFF helicopter landings ✧  
 1:1,000,000 © Jack Gill, 1999

	4-6,000 ft.
	2-4,000 ft.
	1-2,000 ft.
	Under 1,000 ft.

### 3. The Western Front

The long western frontier was far more varied than the border in the east. Both ends of the line were desolate. In the extreme north, the Cease-Fire Line (CFL) in Kashmir traversed a barren, nearly uninhabited land of snow-covered peaks stretching to 23,000 feet in altitude before shifting to cold, rugged, and heavily forested mountains further south. Altitudes gradually decreased along the southern reaches of the CFL, but the terrain remained broken and difficult until the final foothills disappeared into the lush plains of the Punjab. At this point, the CFL, a result of the first and second



India-Pakistan wars, became a recognized international border. The Punjab, densely populated and cultivated on both sides of this border, had a relatively robust transportation infrastructure and offered some opportunities for mechanized forces. However, its cities and villages could serve as ready-made strong points for a defender and its numerous watercourses, large and small, represented significant impediments to rapid movement. The land grew increasingly arid and the infrastructure less sturdy south of the Punjab as the border passed through the great Thar Desert and ended in seasonal salt marshes barely above sea level at the southern extreme.



### **Pakistani Forces and Plans**

Adhering to its grand strategy of defending the east by offensive action in the west, Pakistan retained the bulk of its forces on this lengthy and often difficult frontier. As compared with three under-equipped regular divisions and two ad hoc “hoax” divisions in the east, the Army held ten infantry divisions in the west along with both armored divisions and three independent armored brigades. Unlike the east, the tank fleet in the west included relatively modern types such as American M-48s and Chinese T-59s along with a number of slightly older but still serviceable American M-47s, and some World War II era models (American M-4 tanks and M-36 tank destroyers, as well as one regiment of Soviet T-34s). A large body of paramilitary and militia units (Razakars) supported the regular army, but, as in the east, many of the militiamen proved unreliable. Cumbersome command and control arrangement within the Army hampered effective utilization of these large forces. Although there were three corps headquarters to serve as an intermediate level of command between GHQ and the combat maneuver divisions, at least three divisions and possibly some separate brigades came under direct control of Army headquarters in Rawalpindi. Poor cooperation among the three services compounded the Army’s problems.

The PAF in the west totaled 12 squadrons. Of these, half were sturdy but outdated F-86/Sabre VI fighters, the remainder being a mix of Chinese, French, and American airframes: F-6s, Mirage IIIs, F-104s and B-57s.<sup>80</sup> The F-104 and B-57 squadrons, however, stood at about half of their authorized strength. In addition, Pakistan would use some of its American C-130 transports as bombers during the course of the conflict.

All of the Pakistan Navy’s major combatants were located in the west, and all were based out of the Karachi area. These included a cruiser, five destroyers, and three frigates. Also available were two gunboats, seven minesweepers, and an oiler. Most important, however, were the three submarines left in the west after the Ghazi had sailed for the Bay of Bengal.

Pakistan’s plan in the west called for the beginning of offensive operations five or six days after an Indian attack in the east. These, however, were “preliminary operations,” essentially distractions, designed “to fix the enemy and to divert his attention” away from the intended site of the main attack.<sup>81</sup> They would thus come in the north, with advances on Punch and Chhamb. A small probe southeast of Shakargarh by I Corps was included to provoke a reaction by Indian armored reserves. The aggressive impression created by these drives would be reinforced by moving 7 Infantry Division, a key reserve formation, from its cantonments near Peshawar eastward to assembly areas from which it could support either of the northern attacks. In the meantime, the true offensive was to be prepared by II Corps. With one armored and two infantry divisions (including the rapidly-shifted 7 Division), II Corps would strike into India from the Bahawalnagar area approximately three days after the secondary attacks (and thus some eight or nine days after the Indian invasion of the east). It was hoped that most of India’s armored reserves would have become entangled in Pakistan’s defenses in the Shakargarh salient during this three-day interval between the diversionary attacks and the main effort.<sup>82</sup> The PAF was apprised of the Army’s plan and may have kept as many as four squadrons in reserve to support the grand offensive.<sup>83</sup> In central and southern Punjab province, Pakistan’s IV Corps was to conduct several small operations to seize vulnerable enclaves along the twisting border. In the far south, the Army Chief of Staff, “somewhat peremptorily and without due process of staff study,” instructed 18 Division to launch a push towards Ramgarh on the road to Jaisalmer.<sup>84</sup> This would lead to a minor disaster when the war began.

### **Indian Forces and Plans**

Despite its concentration on the eastern front and its nagging worries about the Chinese border,

India's forces in the west still outnumbered Pakistan's in almost every category. In addition to its lone armored division, India had thirteen infantry divisions, four independent armored brigades and three unattached infantry brigades on its western border with Pakistan. A host of Territorial Army (reserves) and paramilitary BSF battalions provided critical support both on the border and in the rear areas. Additional ground units were already being transferred from the east to the west when the war ended. The Indian armored arm was even more variegated than Pakistan's with British (Centurions), French (AMX-13s), Russian (T-54/55s and PT-76s), and domestic (Vijayantas) models complicating ammunition, repair parts, and training requirements. The Indian Army command structure, however, was superior to its adversary's. Joint service cooperation, though by no means ideal, was better on the Indian side, and the Army's Western and Southern Commands represented a well-understood echelon of command between the corps headquarters and the Chief of the Army Staff in New Delhi.

The IAF enjoyed a considerable numerical advantage in the west with some 24 combat squadrons on hand when all-out war began on 3 December. Nearly half of these squadrons were composed of relatively modern Soviet aircraft (Su-7s and MiG-21s), the remainder being a mixture of compact Gnats, British Hawker Hunters, indigenous HF-24 Maruts, aging French Mysteres, and Canberra bombers. This formidable force was quickly reinforced by units from the east as the war there turned increasingly in India's favor. Beyond these fighters and bombers, India, like Pakistan, used some transports (a squadron of An-12s) in the bomber role during the war.

The Indian Navy presence in the Arabian Sea included a cruiser, a destroyer, eight frigates, two patrol vessels, and two submarines. There were also eight Osa-class patrol boats that would play a significant role in the conflict.<sup>85</sup>

India's strategy in the west was primarily defensive, but, as with Pakistan, Indian planning incorporated a number of small strikes to seize vulnerable salients along the CFL and border. Two larger offensives were also planned. One was to drive into the Shakargarh salient to unhinge any Pakistani attempt to thrust north between Jammu and Pathankot; an attack in the Chhamb/Sialkot area would support this effort. The other major advance was to take place in the desert along the rail line towards Naya Chor.<sup>86</sup> A smaller push in the direction of Rahimyar Khan may also have been considered, but India never made "the long and careful preparations required" to cut Pakistan in half along its narrow line of communications between Karachi and Lahore.<sup>87</sup> In addition, the Army staff developed a contingency plan to launch 1st Armored Division across the border if Pakistan's reserves were committed to the Shakargarh area.<sup>88</sup> Lack of reliable intelligence concerning the locations of Pakistan's reserve formations, especially the two armored divisions and 7 Infantry Division, hampered Indian planning prior to the conflict and introduced a measure of caution during the war.<sup>89</sup>

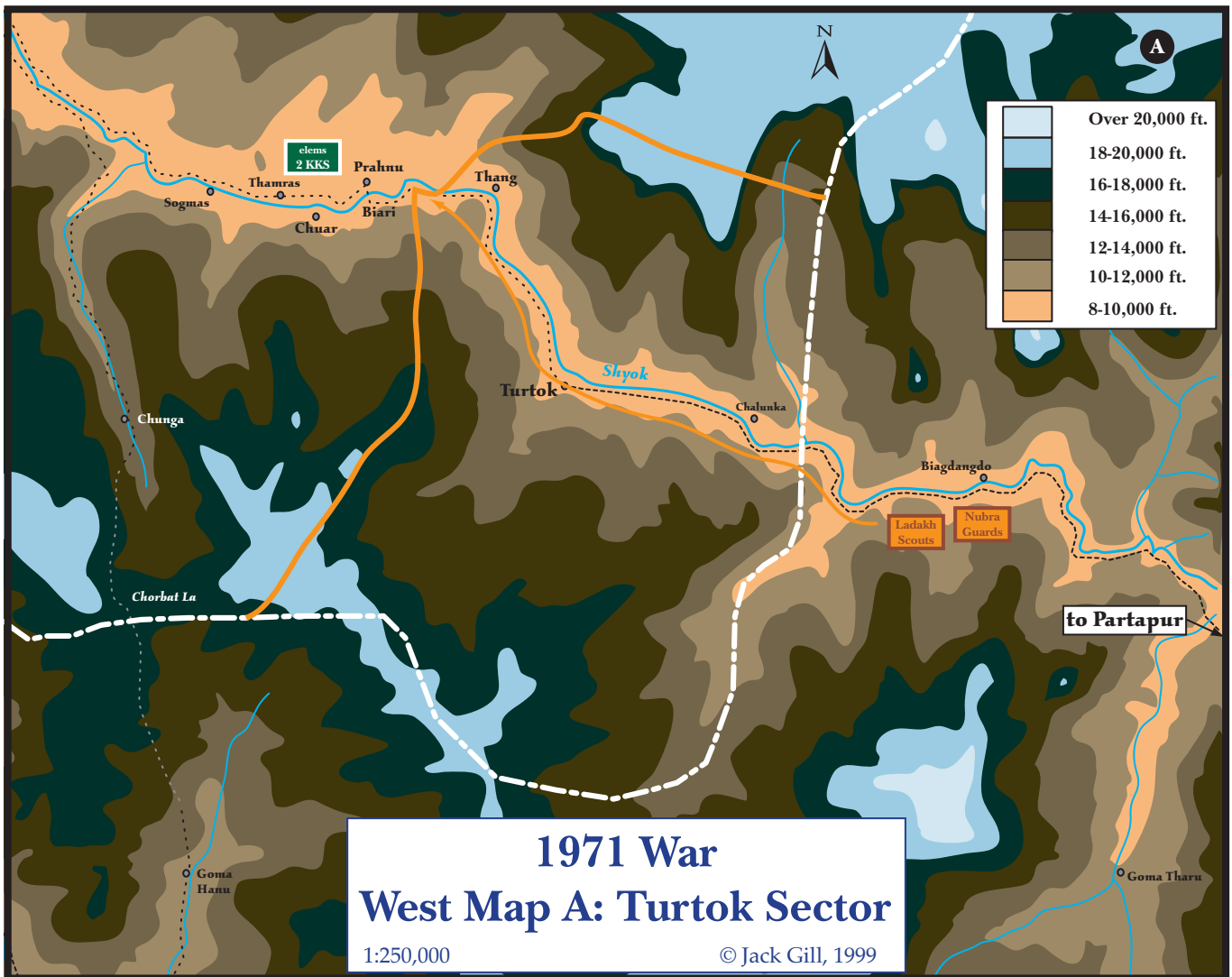
As with the Army, the primary missions of the Air Force and the Navy were defensive in nature. Both services, however, also included major offensive tasks in their portfolios. For the IAF, "support to the Army and Navy, including gaining and maintaining a favorable air situation over the tactical area" was the top priority after defense of the homeland, but air force commanders also planned a counter-air campaign against Pakistani bases and radars.<sup>90</sup> The Navy was responsible for defending the country's long western and southern coastline, but was to act offensively as quickly as possible either to lock the Pakistan Navy in Karachi or to draw it out and destroy it. Additionally, the Navy was tasked with interdicting Pakistani commercial shipping.<sup>91</sup>

### Western Front: Turtok Sector<sup>92</sup>

The “extremely broken and rugged terrain in the Turtok area is among the most difficult in the world,” notes an Indian military historian.<sup>93</sup> With arid, rocky slopes climbing steeply up to heights of 18,000 to 23,000 feet, it is almost completely devoid of vegetation. Even the Shyok River valley rests at approximately 9,000 feet. Subzero winter temperatures and a near total absence of motorable tracks exacerbated the effects of the altitude, making military operations extraordinarily challenging.

Pakistan defended this desolate northern end of the Kashmir CFL (loosely from Kel to Turtok) with six battalions (called “wings”) of paramilitary troops belonging to the Frontier Corps. These units reported to the Director General of the Frontier Corps in Gilgit, who in turn reported directly to Army headquarters. The Turtok sector itself was held by two or three companies of Karakoram and Gilgit Scouts recruited from mountain peoples on the Pakistan side of the CFL.

The Indian troops in the area consisted of three companies of semi-regular Ladakh Scouts and 500 hastily raised local militia called Nubra Guards. In both cases, the Indian troops were hardy men, predominantly Buddhist, who had been born in the region and were at least somewhat inured to its extreme conditions. They operated under the command of 3 Infantry Division with its headquarters at Leh; the division was also responsible for the boundary with China to the east.



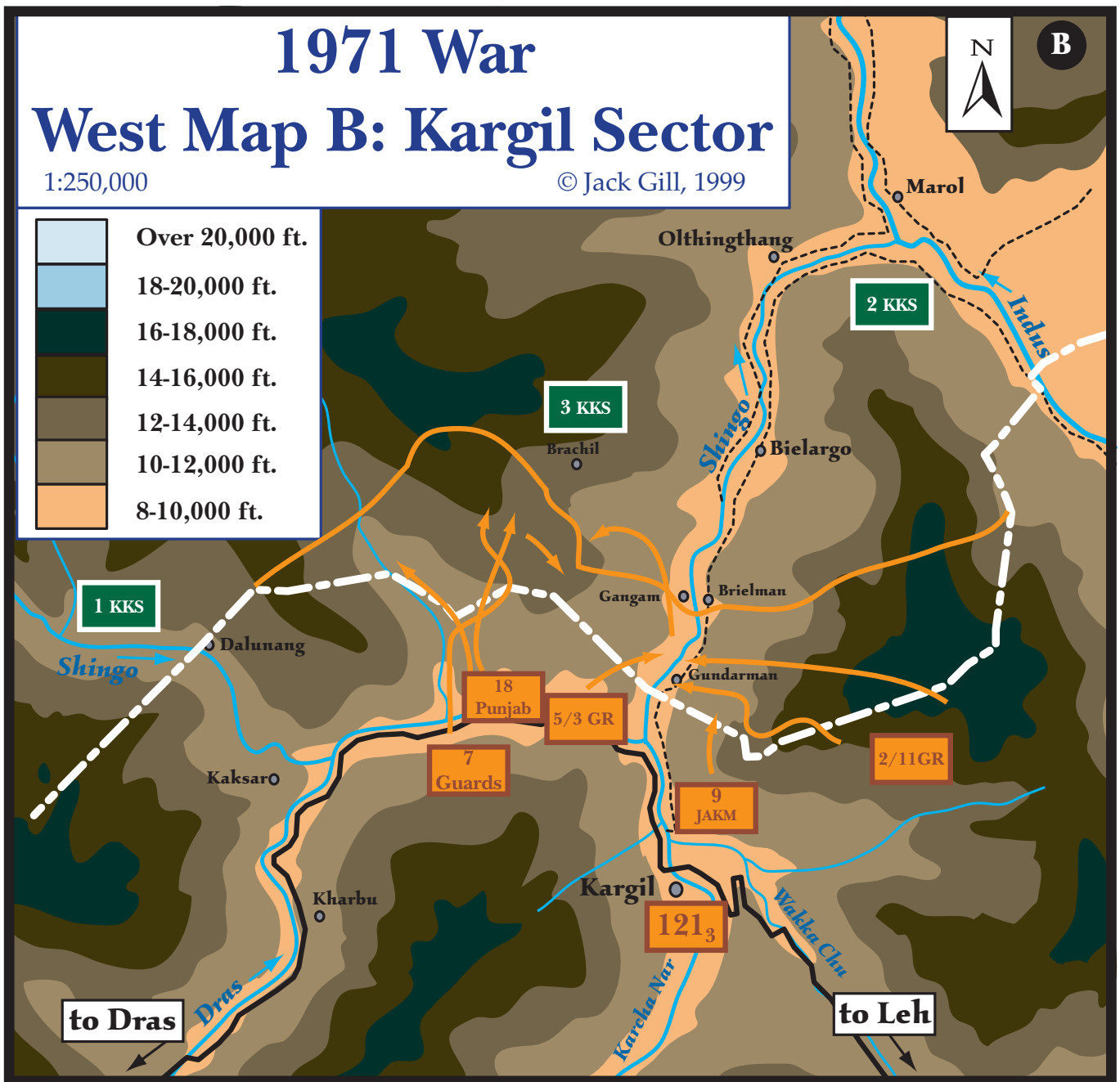
The Ladakh Scouts were well-trained and well-led, but the “Nubra Guards” had only received two weeks of instruction in basic weapons handling when the war began. The Pakistani Scouts, on the other hand, were not as well prepared as their foes in training or equipment.<sup>94</sup>

The commandant of the Ladakh Scouts was a local officer, Major Chowang Rinchen, who had won India’s second highest combat gallantry award in during the first Kashmir war in 1948, but who had become infamous for being “in constant trouble because he found military discipline irksome.”<sup>95</sup> He was, however, an energetic and resourceful commander who knew his men and the terrain. Under Rinchen’s leadership, the Indian forces attacked on the night of 8 December and quickly captured several Pakistani posts. One of the skirmishes centered on possession of a position at nearly 20,000 feet. Rinchen rapidly exploited his success, frequently using night attacks. By the time the cease-fire was announced, his men had overcome terrain, climate and enemy resistance to reach Thang. Logistical problems precluded further advances, but Rinchen’s superiors had every reason to be pleased with his performance under appalling conditions. Indian losses illustrate the physical challenges of the region: although only three men were wounded by enemy action, Rinchen’s force suffered 45 cases of frostbite during this two week period.<sup>96</sup>



### Western Front: Kargil Sector

As with the Turtok Sector, the high-altitude “moonscape” around Kargil presented both sides with enormous challenges. In this sector, however, India had a specific and important military objective: to clear Pakistani troops from the heights that dominated the Dras-Kargil-Leh road. This road, open only from May to September, served as the main supply line for the civilian population and military garrison in remote Ladakh (it continues to perform this function today, hence the Indian sensitivity to the Pakistani incursion in 1999). Pushing across the “windswept and inhospitable heights” against several companies of Karakoram Scouts, five battalions of Brigadier M. L. Whig’s 121 Independent Infantry Brigade Group successfully secured about 110 square kilometers north of Kargil between 7 and 17 December.<sup>97</sup> However, the brigade failed to reach its principal objective, the tiny village of Olthingthang near the confluence of the Shingo and Indus Rivers. Contending with fierce weather

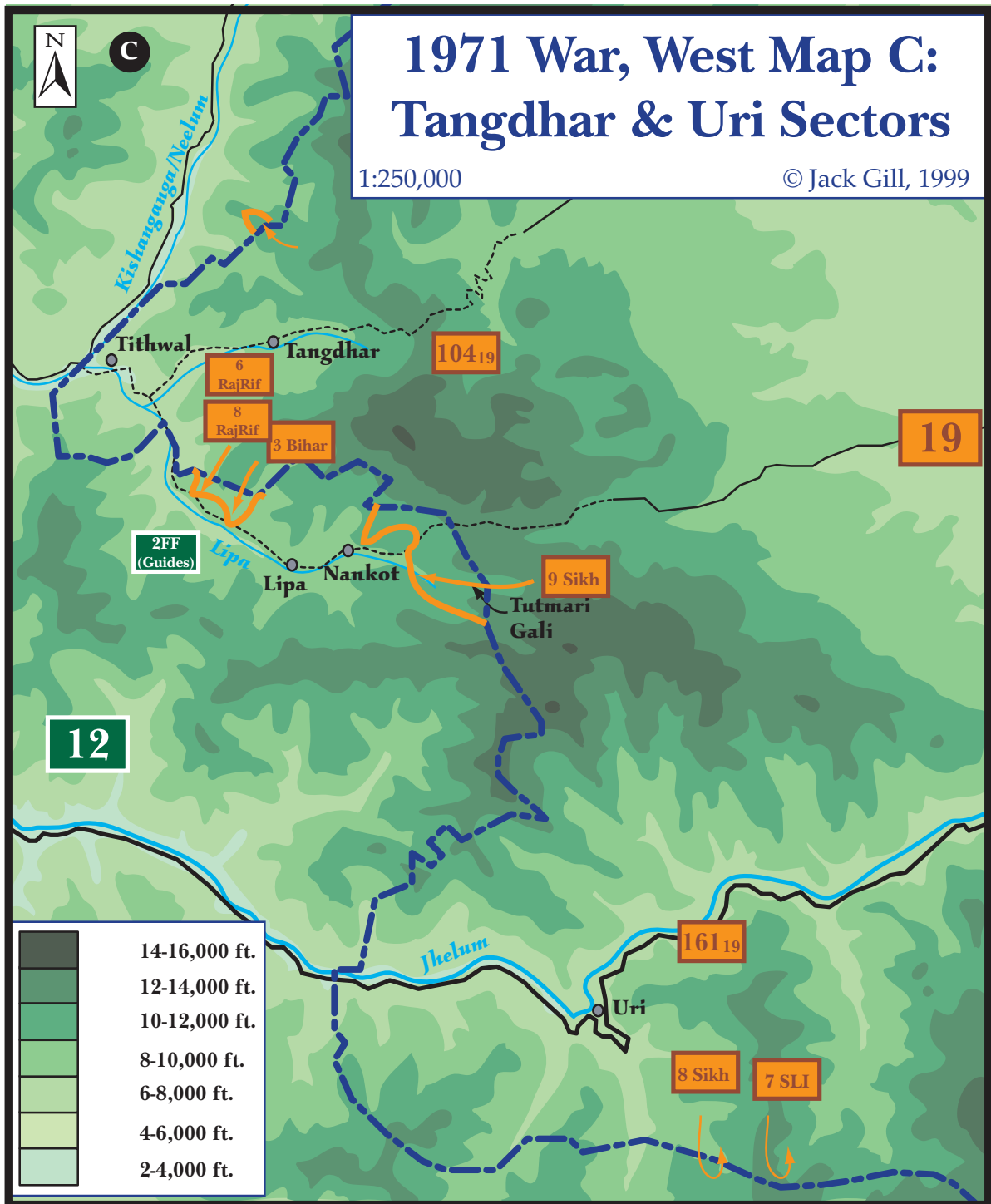


as well as the enemy, the Indians lost 55 killed, 195 wounded and “an inordinately high toll” of 517 cases of frostbite, more than 300 of these from one battalion alone (7 Guards).<sup>98</sup> India claimed Pakistani casualties of 114 killed and 32 prisoners of war.

Note: Some of the heaviest fighting during the summer of 1999 took place just east of the area gained by India in 1971. There was also a small incursion near Kaksar to the west. However, there was almost no action on the old 1971 battlefield. India had captured parts of this area twice during 1965, but had returned control to Pakistan in accordance with cease-fire agreements.

### Western Front: Tangdhar and Uri Sectors

The forbidding peaks of the Zaskar Range block precipitation and make Ladakh a high desert, but south and west of these crags Kashmir is green and lush from heavy annual rainfall. Though not so high as Ladakh, the thickly wooded slopes of Kashmir are rugged and pose a significant obstacle to military movement. Furthermore, in 1971, neither side planned major offensive operations in the Tangdhar and Uri sectors. Pakistan's 12 Division, with six infantry brigades, was responsible for almost the entire north-south face of Kashmir, a distance of some 186 miles. Although twice as large as a normal division, the men were spread



thinly on the ground to cover this enormous zone. The division commander, Major General Akbar Khan, had to economize even more to scrape together enough men for a strike towards Punch further south.<sup>99</sup> India's 19 Division was not as desperately short on manpower, but uncertainty regarding the location of Pakistan's 7 Infantry Division made Indian commanders chary of committing their own reserves. As a result, this area only witnessed a few small Indian advances as 19 Division attempted to secure several tactically advantageous features. Despite snow, rough terrain, and Pakistani defenses, the Indian 104 Brigade made tactical gains on the southern front of the Tangdhar salient, especially in the area of the Tutmari Galli where 9 Sikh performed well. This Indian pressure forced General Akbar Khan to transfer a battalion from the Punch area to the Tangdhar/Lipa sector on 9 December, thus reducing the capacity of 12 Division to conduct offensive operations. A second battalion was detached from 12 Division's reserve on 16 December to reinforce the defenders.

A tiny enclave in the Tutmari Galli area was still in Pakistani hands when the cease-fire was announced. This situation occasioned renewed skirmishing in May 1972, when Indian troops launched an abortive attempt to capture it before the final peace agreement was signed.

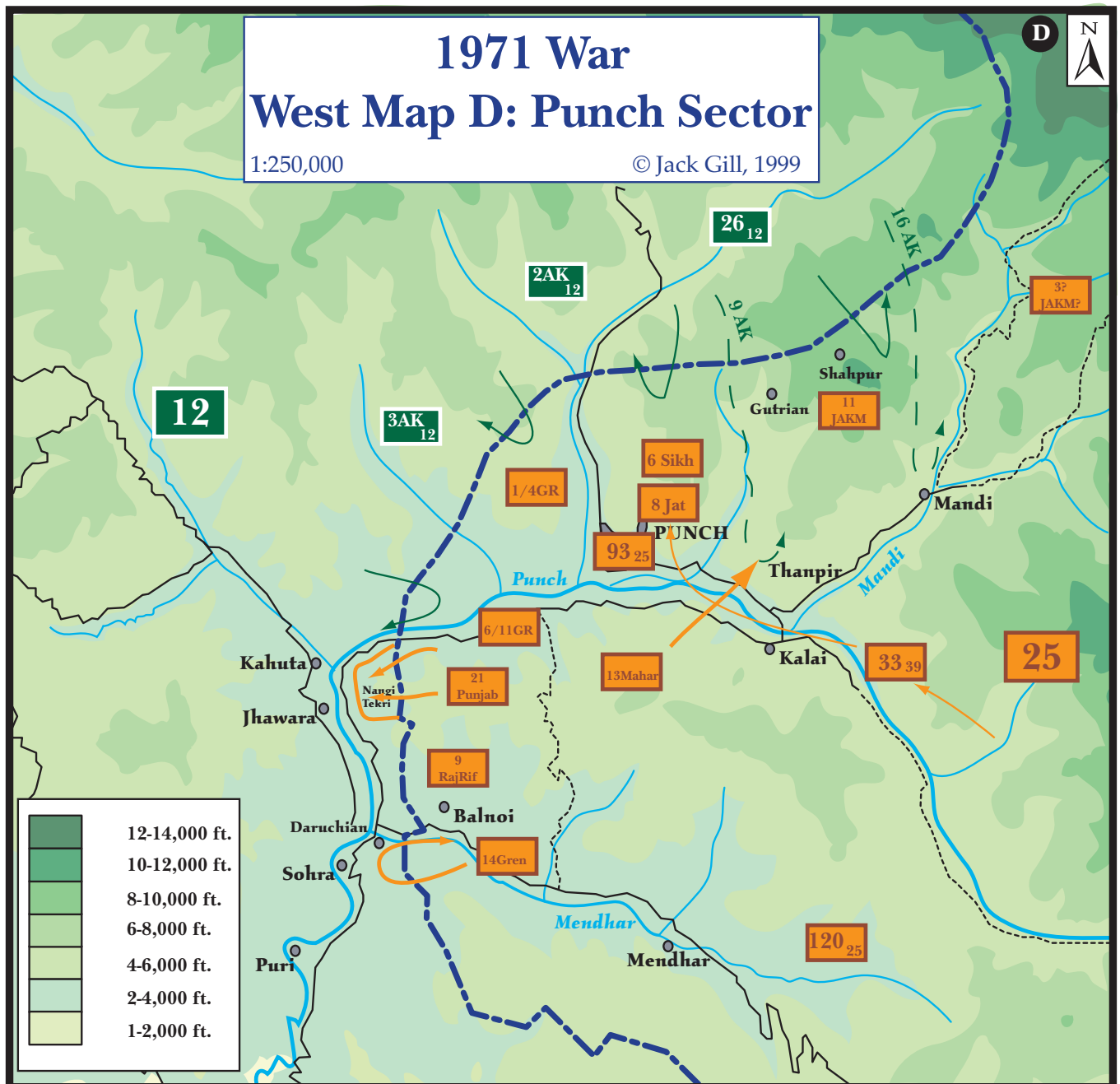
The Indian 161 Brigade's efforts to seize two small areas on the southern flank of the Uri salient failed to achieve their objectives. Pakistani defenders repulsed 8 Sikh and 7 Sikh Light Infantry on the night of 4/5 December and action settled in to desultory skirmishing for the remainder of the war.<sup>100</sup> Minor skirmishes continued in this sector for several days even after the cease-fire.

Northeast of Tangdhar, Indian paramilitary Border Security Force (BSF) troops gained some terrain (Northern Gallies Sector), pushing Pakistani paramilitary outposts back towards the Kishanganga (or Neelum) River.

### Western Front: Punch Sector

The region in and around the town of Punch is also rugged and heavily forested. Pakistan included a thrust against Punch in its overall offensive plan, in part to distract Indian attention from the main attack to be launched by II Corps, and in part to exploit the apparent vulnerability of the Punch salient. India, however, noticed a Pakistani buildup opposite the salient during November and moved 33 Brigade of 39 Division into the sector to support 25 Division's 93 Brigade. Strong Indian reserves were thus already on hand and prepared when the war broke out.

On 3 December, Pakistan's 12 Division took advantage of the terrain and vegetation to infiltrate two battalions (9 and 16 Azad Kashmir) as part of a two-brigade attack across the northern face of the Punch salient. Although the two battalions succeeded in threading their way past the Indian outpost line, the Indian defenses along the CFL held firm and reinforcements from 33 Brigade

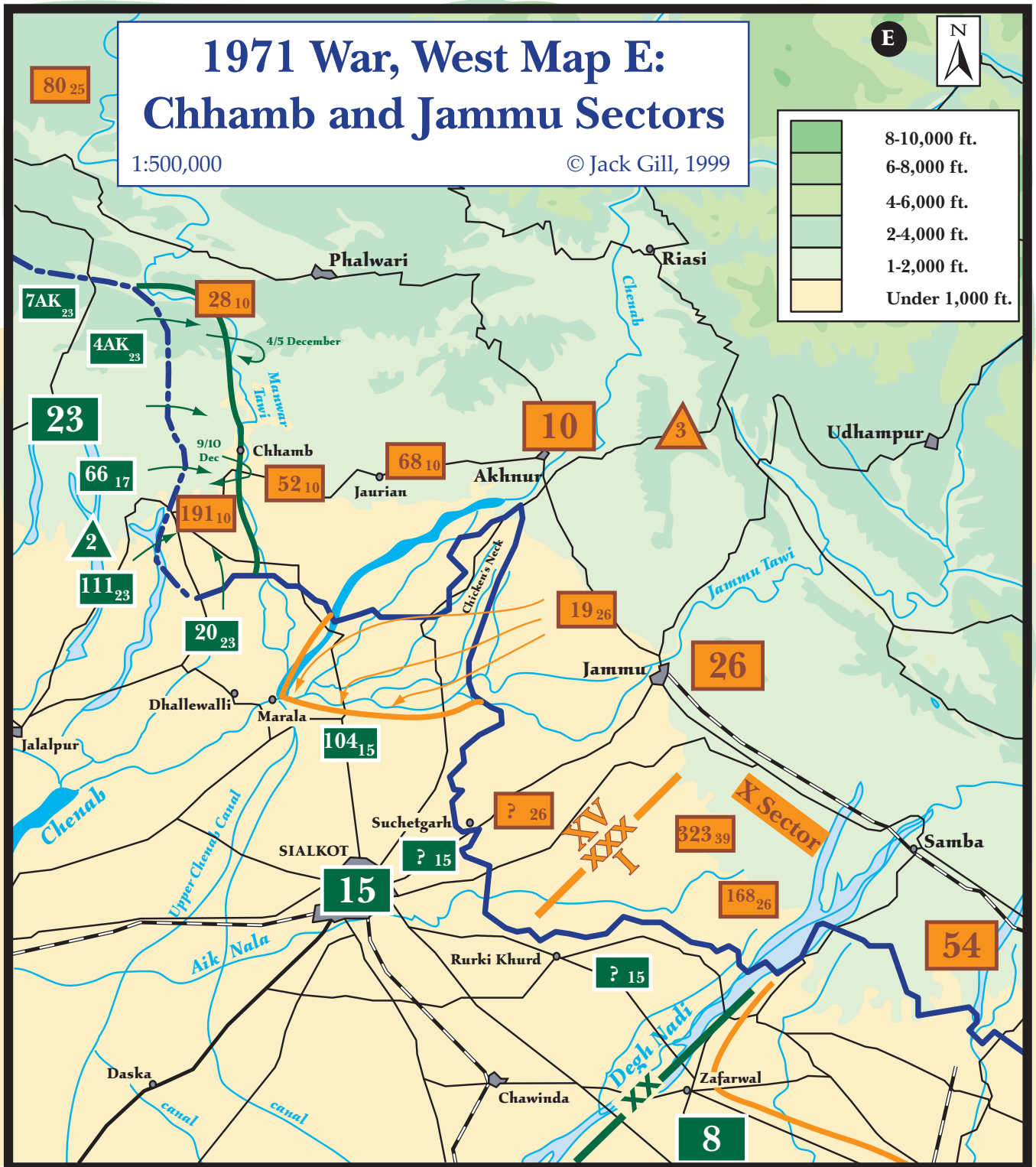


soon counterattacked, forcing the infiltrators to withdraw. A cohesive defense, well-directed at the brigade level and enjoying excellent artillery support, succeeded in repelling the attackers despite the danger posed to resupply and morale by the two infiltrating Pakistani battalions. By 7 December, the Pakistani troops had returned to their side of the CFL. Heavy casualties among the attacking Pakistani troops, failure to capture a significant portion of the outer Indian defenses, and the Indian advances further north in the Lipa area were the major factors in convincing the 12 Division commander to call off the Punch offensive.<sup>101</sup>

India struck back on the night of 10/11 December, taking a promontory above the Punch River opposite Kahuta in a well-conducted assault by 21 Punjab and 9 Rajputana Rifles. Further south at Daruchian, however, a similar night attack by 14 Grenadiers was thrown back with heavy losses on 13/14 December (158 Indian casualties).<sup>102</sup>

### Western Front: Chhamb and Jammu Sectors

Pakistan made its most significant advances in the Chhamb sector, revisiting a battlefield from the 1965 war to threaten one of India's key overland links to Kashmir and to deprive India of a launching pad for potential offensive operations. Pressing forward on the night of 3/4 December, the Pakistani 23 Division, reinforced with the artillery assets of 17 Division and three additional



maneuver brigades, pushed back the forward brigade (191 Brigade under Brigadier R. K. Jasbir Singh) of India's 10 Division.<sup>103</sup> The Indian forces, initially postured to assume the offensive, had been hastily realigned for a defensive mission after the Indian Army's senior leaders suddenly changed their plans at a meeting on the evening of 1 December. The division was thus ill prepared when the Pakistanis attacked. After three days of heavy fighting which saw, among other things, the capture of two batteries of 216 Medium Regiment by infiltrating Pakistani infantry, 191 Brigade withdrew behind the river on 6 December.<sup>104</sup> Tenacious defense by 5 Sikh was key in delaying the Pakistani advance. Indian 68 Brigade hastily took up the defense of the Manawar Tawi line as the broken 191 Brigade pulled back to the west. Fortunately for the Indians, 23 Division's mission was only to secure the line of the river, so the Pakistanis did not seize the opportunity to pursue during this moment of Indian vulnerability.<sup>105</sup> On the division commander's initiative, however, Pakistan 23 Division soon returned to the attack and, by the morning of 10 December, had established a shallow bridgehead across the Manawar Tawi. This proved to be the limit of 23 Division's advance. The accidental death of the energetic division commander in a helicopter crash on 9 December, robbed the attack of its impetus and the lodgment on the Indian side of the river was evacuated during the following day (11 December). The sector remained quiet for the remainder of the war and Pakistan retained the area west of the Manawar Tawi in the peace settlement.<sup>106</sup>

Southeast of Chhamb, the Indian 26 Division scored a success by capturing a narrow salient known as "the Chicken's Neck" (or Phuklian salient to the Pakistanis) in a quick two-day operation against light resistance (6-7 December). The division also evicted small Pakistani groups that had occupied two Indian border posts. To the frustration of its aggressive commander, Major General Z. C. "Zoru" Bakshi, 26 Division was restricted to these minor offensive actions and a prewar plan to push for Sialkot was canceled: "After the Pakistani thrust at Chhamb, headquarters was in a flap and they took away one of my brigades and told me not to attack."<sup>107</sup> Bakshi's missing brigade (168) ended up with a defensive mission under an ad hoc headquarters called "X-ray Sector" with 323 Brigade of 39 Division. "X-ray Sector" thus became the right flank unit of I Corps, protecting the area from the Degh Nadi to the left flank of 26 Division.

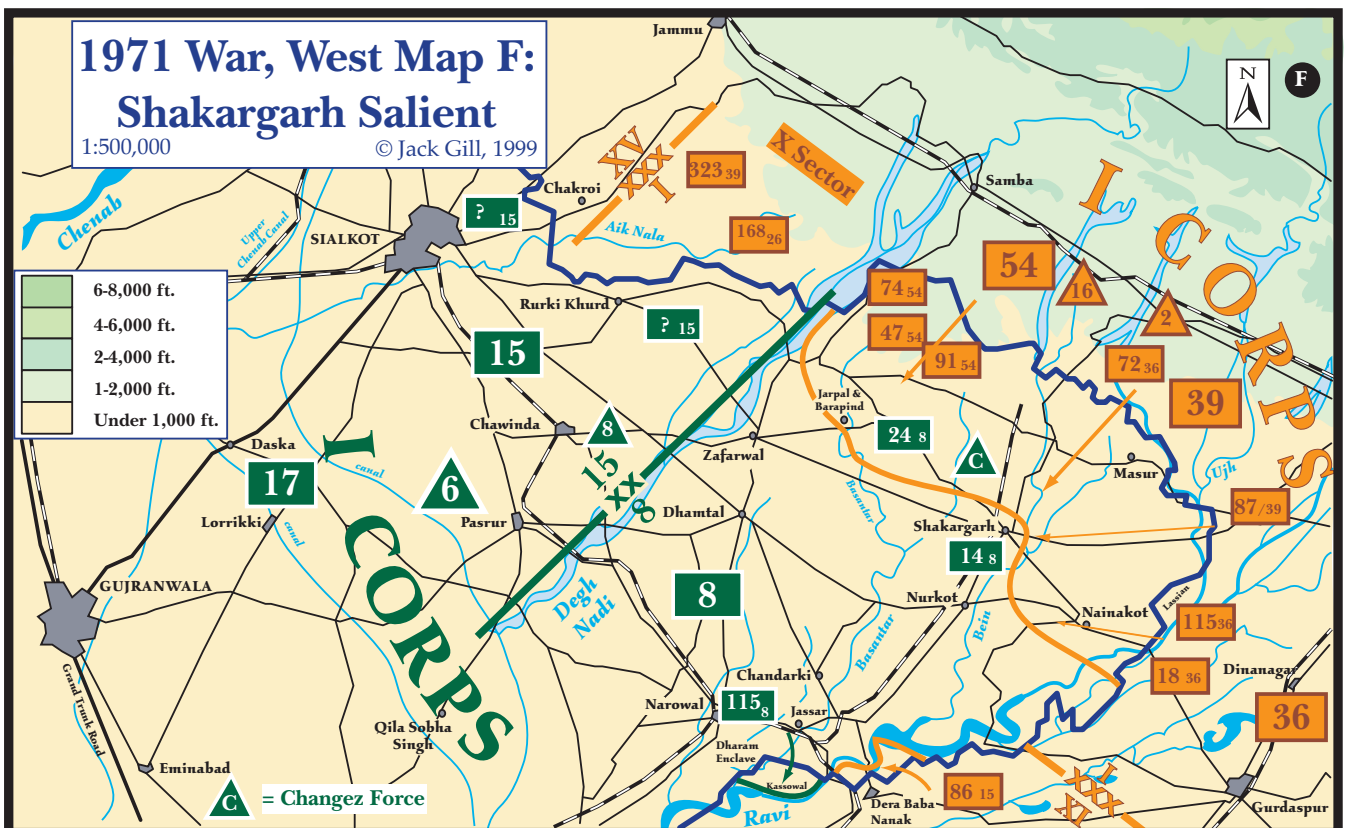


### Western Front: Shakargarh Salient

India planned its major Western Front offensive action for the Shakargarh bulge area. With three infantry divisions and two armored brigades, Indian I Corps was to push into the salient from the north and east to shield vulnerable parts of India, to tie down Pakistani mechanized forces, and to seize as much territory as possible with an eye towards peace negotiations. Pakistan's I Corps, charged with the defense of the Shakargarh bulge, had 15 Division on the left around Sialkot, 8 Division on the right east of the Degh Nadi, and 8 Armored Brigade in support of both forward divisions. Also belonging to I Corps but held in the rear was Pakistan's so-called "Army Reserve North" consisting of 6 Armored Division and 17 Infantry Division.

Opening on 5 December, the Indian attack fell on Pakistan's 8 Division but quickly ran into trouble. In the view of many Indian commentators, poor coordination, some weak leaders, and excessive caution retarded progress so that the most successful Indian formation (54 Division) only managed a small advance of approximately eight miles in two weeks of operations.<sup>108</sup> Moreover, the Indians spent most of these two weeks negotiating minefields and nudging back the 8 Division's covering troops (a capably commanded ad hoc grouping called "Changez Force") and only ran up against the main defenses as the war was ending.<sup>109</sup>

On the other hand, repeated counterattacks conducted by Pakistan's 8 Independent Armored Brigade near Jarpal and Barapind northeast of Zafarwal from 15 to 17 December were repulsed with heavy losses by Indian 54 Division (notably India's Poona Horse tank regiment). In a fruitless assault in the dawn hours of 17 December, the last day of the war, 35 Frontier Force alone lost 57 men killed and 73 wounded. Pakistani tank losses during the two-day struggle were also high: 40 to 50 tanks from the two attacking regiments (13 Lancers and 31 Cavalry) of 8 Armored Brigade.<sup>110</sup> The failure and cost of these assaults led one Pakistani general to comment that "the few counterattacks which 8 Division tried during the war were most noticeable by their lack of planning."<sup>111</sup> In the end,



India occupied a substantial piece of Pakistani territory, but failed to penetrate its main defenses or engage its mechanized reserves.<sup>112</sup> These Pakistani reserves, however, remained well back from the front line and played only a marginal role in the conflict: while 6 Armored Division waited for orders near Pasrur, 17 Division found itself reduced to little more than a lone maneuver brigade as major detachments were sent off to 23 Division on the left and IV Corps on the right.<sup>113</sup>

### Western Front: Northern Punjab Sector

Unlike 1965 and despite a heavy concentration of forces on both sides, this part of the Punjab did not see major action by either army. On the Pakistani side, IV Corps was to stay on the defensive, attempting to cover an immense sector with inadequate resources until ordered to support the main offensive. When Army headquarters decided to launch this main offensive, IV Corps was to attack towards Ajnala in the north as a feint, while seizing Hussainiwala, cutting the road between Ferozepur and Jalalabad, capturing Sulaimanke, and establishing a lodgment on the Indian side of the border south of Bahawalnagar for II Corps to exploit. Given the paucity of forces assigned to IV Corps, the feasibility of these manifold operations must be questioned.

In the event, little happened in this sector. In the northern Punjab between Amritsar and Lahore, India's reinforced 15 Division of XI Corps captured Pakistani enclaves along the Ravi River at Dera Baba Nanak (usually called Jassar in Pakistani accounts) and Burj. Pakistan occupied an Indian

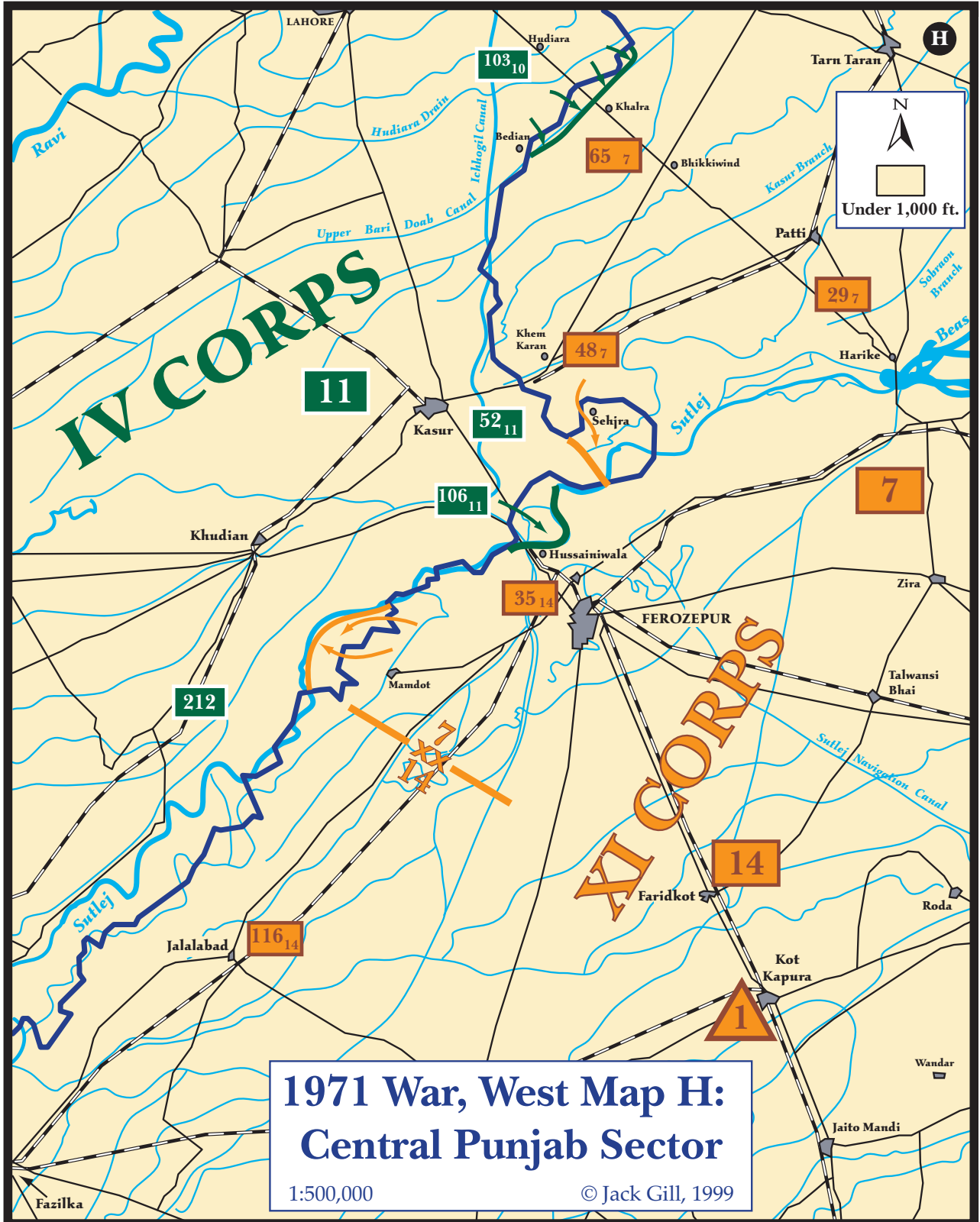


enclave at Kassowal (also known as the Dharam enclave) southwest of Dera Baba Nanak and made shallow inroads at several points opposite Lahore, most notably near Khalra in the Indian 7 Division zone. A number of minor border posts were also exchanged along the Ravi, but neither side engaged in anything beyond these local offensive operations.<sup>114</sup>

On 10 December, Pakistan IV Corps deposited a quantity of unserviceable bridging equipment in the 88 Brigade sector as a ruse to support the impression that a major attack would indeed be launched across the Ravi near Maqboolpur.<sup>115</sup> There is no indication, however, that the Indians either noticed or gave much heed to this deception.

### Western Front: Central Punjab Sector

Concerned about the possibility of a Pakistani thrust emanating from Bahawalnagar, India initially kept a significant reserve in this area: 14 Infantry Division and 1 Armored Division.<sup>116</sup> After the first few days of the war, however, 14 Division found itself committed to the border in several



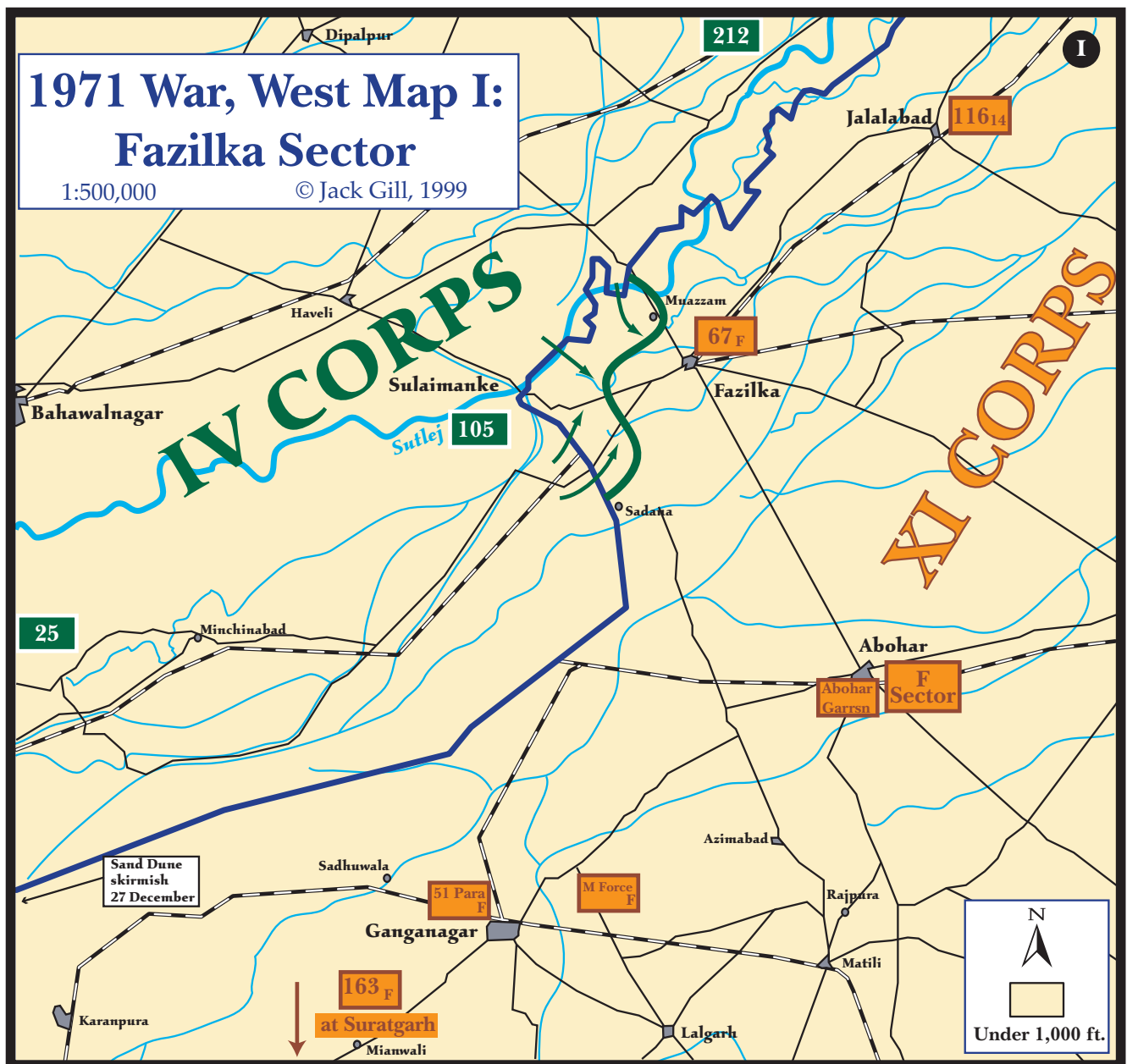
locations and was thus no longer available as a true reserve. India's lone armored division, on the other hand, remained in this area throughout the conflict but took no active part in the fighting.

As in the northern Punjab, this area was the scene of several dramatic struggles for small enclaves along a major river, in this case the Sutlej. The 48 Brigade of India's 7 Division cleared a protrusion known as the Sehjra Bulge on 5/6 December and 35 Brigade of 14 Division occupied a fairly large enclave near Mamdot just prior to the cease-fire. Pakistan's 106 Brigade, however, succeeded in overwhelming stout resistance by Indian 15 Punjab to take a significant piece of ground near Hussainiwala, thereby controlling a key dam and threatening the important border town of Ferozepur. Further south, Indian 116 Brigade (also 14 Division) captured thirteen Pakistani border posts in its zone along the Sutlej.

### Western Front: Fazilka Sector

As at Hussainiwala, Pakistan achieved surprise against the Indian defenders west of Fazilka across the border from the Sulaimanke headworks. With poor dispositions and inept leadership, India's 67 Brigade lost a significant parcel of land to Pakistan's 105 Brigade despite repeated and costly counterattacks. Fortunately for India, indecision on the part of Pakistan's high command kept its potentially powerful II Corps from executing a planned offensive against India's "Foxtrot Sector" (or simply "F Sector").

This area was intended to be the zone of attack for Pakistan's II Corps in the grand offensive to relieve pressure on East Pakistan and exploit presumed Indian weakness in the west.<sup>117</sup> The Pakistani plan, called "Changez Khan," was approved in September 1971. It called for 105 Brigade and 25 Brigade to come under II Corps as it drove east from the vicinity of Bahawalnagar to cross the international border before turning to the northeast to push for Bhatinda and Ludhiana. Once II Corps had secured its objectives, IV Corps was to advance east from its positions along the Ravi. In

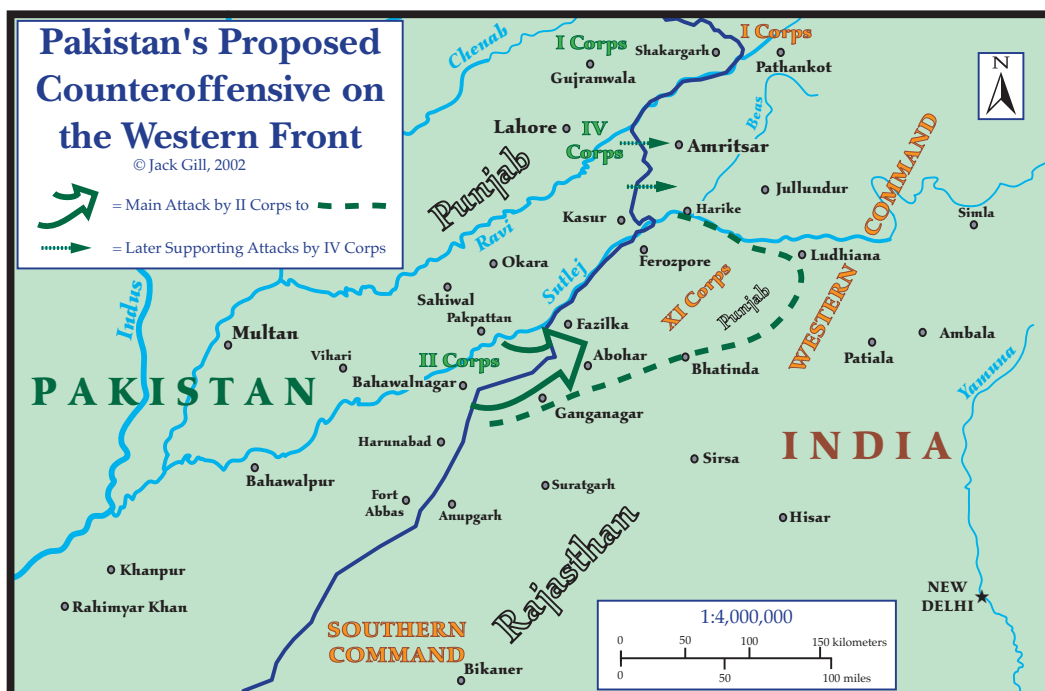


addition to reserving several squadrons to support the planned attack, the PAF had also positioned mobile radar and pre-stocked forward airfields in the proposed battle area.<sup>118</sup>

Army headquarters issued the order for II Corps to shift to its forward assembly areas on 14 December and major elements of 1 Armored Division began to move the following day, while the 7 Division was also concentrating south of the Sutlej, its officers hoping for “an end to the agony of suspense.”<sup>119</sup> By this time, however, the other major component of II Corps, 33 Division, had already been detached from the reserve. Army headquarters had responded to Indian advances elsewhere by breaking up 33 Division to reinforce I Corps in the north and 18 Division in the south. As a consequence, the II Corps offensive was deprived of approximately one third of its striking power before it had even begun. At 1845 hours on 16 December, however, new instructions arrived from Army headquarters “freezing all movements” until further notice. Nine trains carrying 1 Armored Division were laboriously unloaded, the equipment was dispersed, and II Corps, with its constituent pieces on both sides of the Sutlej, settled in to await orders. Had the operation proceeded according to schedule the corps probably could have opened its attack in the early morning hours of 17 December, but the “freeze” order meant that it was still on the Pakistan side of the border when the cease-fire went into effect at 2000 hours on 17 December.<sup>120</sup>

Although it is doubtful that II Corps could have achieved its optimistic operational goals, nothing in Pakistan’s conduct of the war in the west has generated more controversy among subsequent commentators than the failure to launch the II Corps counteroffensive. The details of the delay in beginning the attack and the issuance of the “freeze” order are unclear, but most writers point to confusion and vacillation prevalent within the high command.<sup>121</sup> One source contends that lack of adequate PAF support was a major contributing factor; he avers that the Commander in Chief of the Air Force retracted previous promises of assistance a few days before the operation was to begin.<sup>122</sup>

There was no significant action south of Fazilka, although Indian 4 Para of 51 Para Brigade conducted a costly assault to evict an intruding Pakistani platoon from a nameless sand dune near the village of Nagi several days after the cease-fire (26/27 December). This action cost 4 Para 21 killed and 60 wounded.<sup>123</sup>

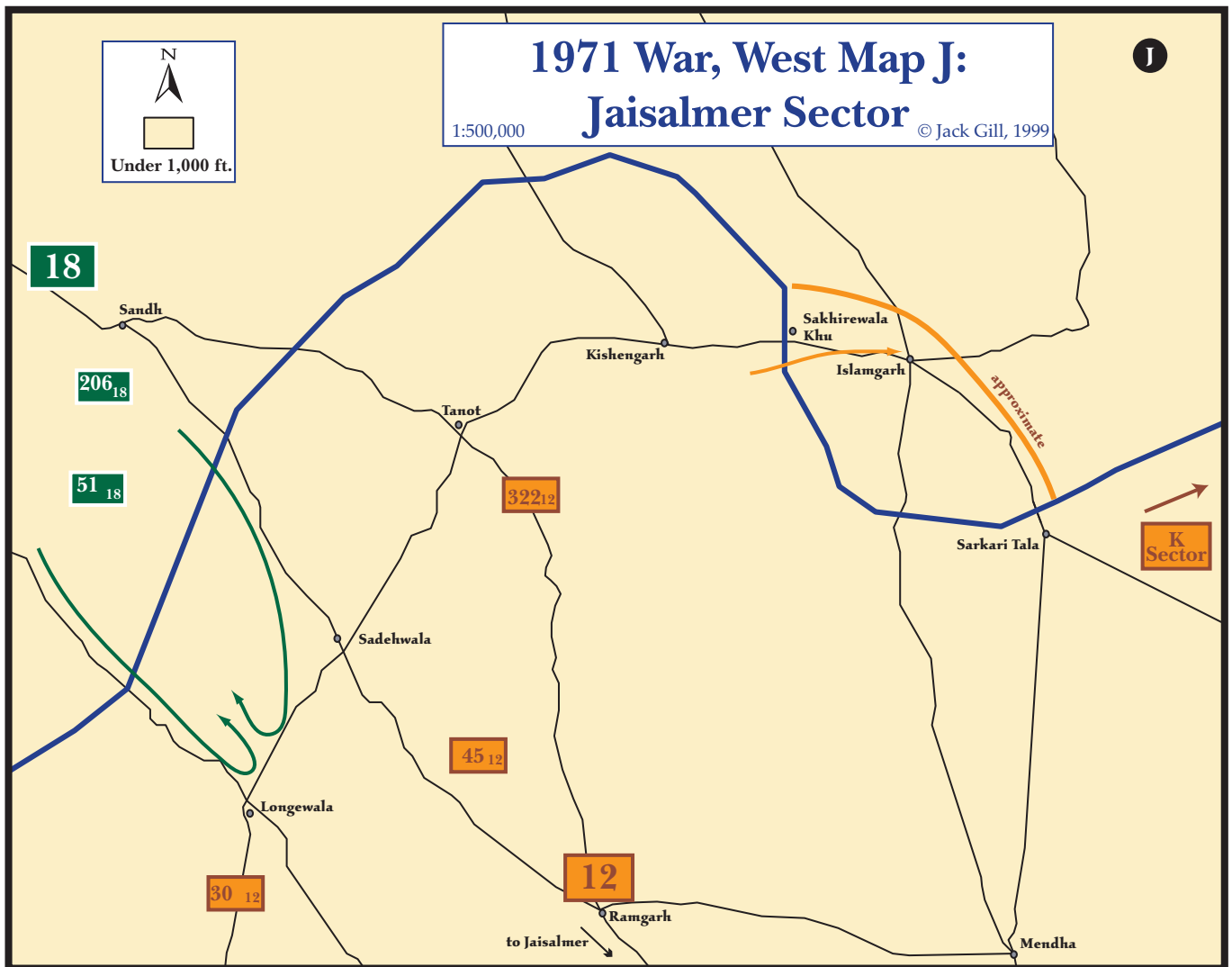




### Western Front: Jaisalmer Sector

The great desert that sweeps across the southern portion of the India-Pakistan border presents a formidable obstacle to operations by major military formations. In addition to climatic extremes and lack of water, road and rail connections are scarce and vehicular movement is generally restricted to the area's few tracks. Nonetheless, both sides committed significant forces to this barren region and planned advances across the border. Pakistani Army headquarters had allotted this enormous zone to a single division supported by some paramilitary and irregular troops. This formation, 18 Division, had two brigades opposite Jaisalmer and one in the southern portion of its sector near Naya Chor. On the Indian side of the border, Lieutenant General Gopal Gurunath Bewoor's Southern Command with two regular divisions and two sector headquarters was responsible for the area.

In the Jaisalmer sector, both sides planned to take the offensive. Although Pakistan's 18 Division had neither the training, the equipment, nor the logistical support necessary to sustain a major advance, it was expected to capture Ramgarh and press on to neutralize the airfield at Jaisalmer. Unfortunately for 18 Division, no proper coordination was arranged with the PAF.<sup>124</sup> Pakistani 51 and 206 Brigades, reinforced by two tank regiments (22 and 38 Cavalry), duly headed for the western face of the Jaisalmer bulge on 3 December. The Indian 12 Division, methodically preparing its own offensive, was caught by surprise when the Pakistanis appeared around Longewala. Pakistani



indecision and staunch resistance by Indian 23 Punjab, however, stalled the attack and provided an opportunity for the IAF to come to the assistance of 23 Punjab. With no opposition in the air to trouble them, marauding IAF Hunters from Jaisalmer wreaked havoc on the vulnerable Pakistani tank columns strung out in the open desert. By 7 December, the attacking Pakistani brigades were in full retreat having suffered heavy losses, including at least 20 tanks and more than 100 other vehicles destroyed or abandoned.<sup>125</sup> India's 12 Division did not pursue very far ("mercifully" wrote the Pakistani Major General Fazal Muqeem Khan) and, other than the capture of Islamgarh on 4 December, 12 Division spent the remainder of the war screening its sector.<sup>126</sup> Pakistan's leadership, alarmed by the serious reverse at Longewala, sent a brigade of 33 Division to reinforce 18 Division in this sector, while the division headquarters, artillery, and 60 Brigade hurried south to take control of the Naya Chor sector.<sup>127</sup>

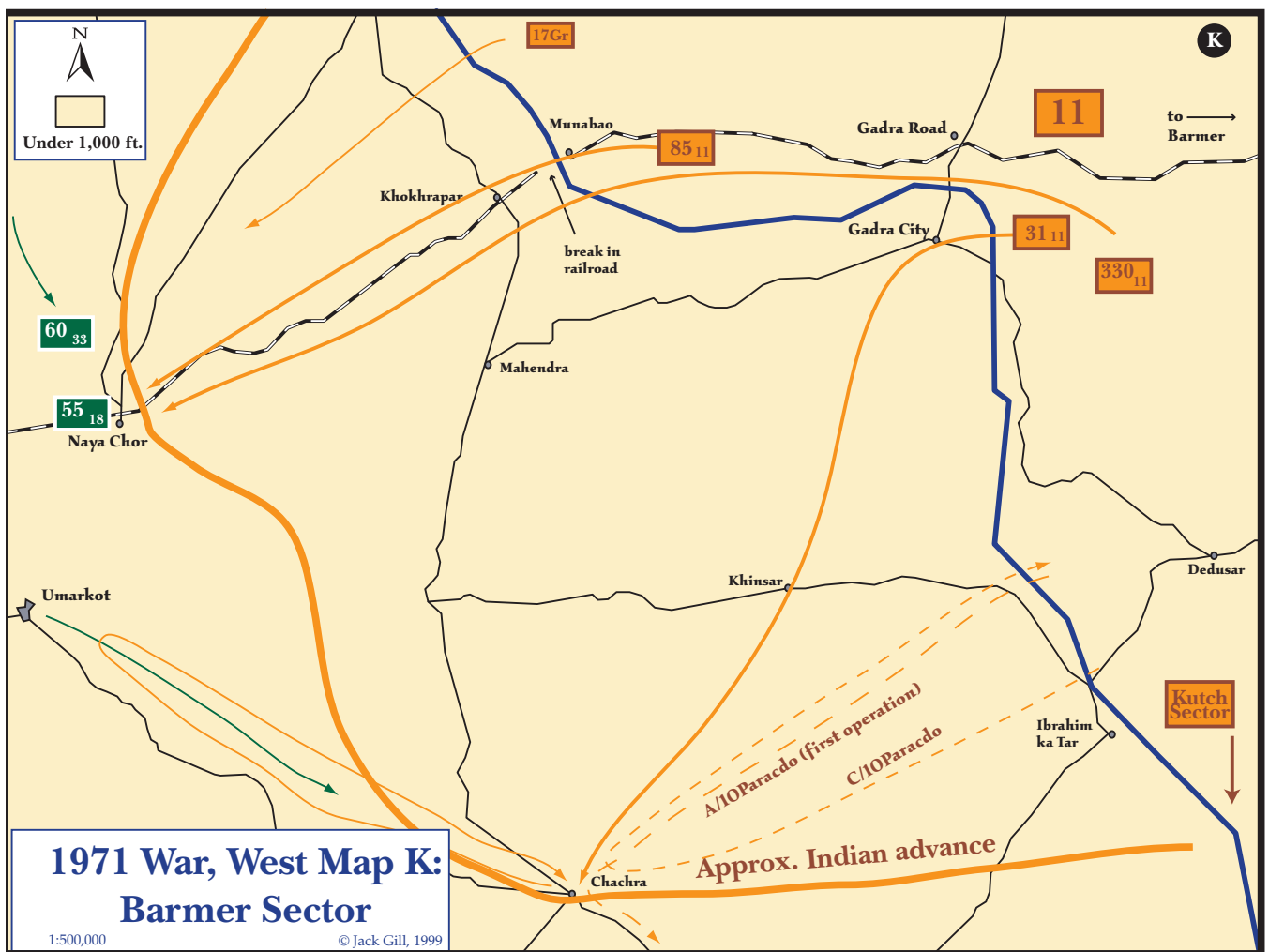
North of Jaisalmer was India's Bikaner Sector, also known as "K" or "Kilo Sector." In this desolate landscape, 13 Grenadiers, a camel battalion, supported by two BSF battalions, occupied a number of Pakistani border posts.<sup>128</sup>

### Western Front: Barmer Sector

With only one brigade of regulars in this area (55 Brigade of 18 Division), Pakistani offensive operations were out of the question. India's 11 Division, however, struck across the desert on the evening of 4 December in an effort to reach the "green belt" along the Indus near Hyderabad. While a camel-mounted battalion (17 Grenadiers) shielded the division's northern flank, two brigades (85 and 330) pushed for Naya Chor astride the rail line, and 31 Brigade advanced on Chachra. Facing little resistance at first, the Indians quickly achieved major territorial gains and constructed a link between the Indian and Pakistani railroads (Munabao to Khokhrapar) to support further operations. Despite the rail connection, logistical problems and prolonged hesitation brought the division's progress to a halt before it reached Naya Chor on its northern axis of advance. Persistent air attacks by the PAF increased the difficulty of supplying 11 Division's forward elements.<sup>129</sup> By the time the advance resumed, the Pakistani troops had been reinforced by 60 Brigade from 33 Division. Moreover, 33 Division had taken responsibility for the sector, assuming command of 55 Brigade in the process. Thus bolstered, the Pakistanis easily repelled 11 Division's renewed attempts to push forward.<sup>130</sup>

On the southern axis, Chachra fell to 31 Brigade after a brief fight, but a battalion probing toward Umarmkot (18 Madras) found itself unsupported and was forced back by a Pakistani counterattack.

The cease-fire precluded further Indian advances, but 11 Division had seized almost 3,000 square miles of Pakistani territory, more than any other formation on the Western Front. Moreover,



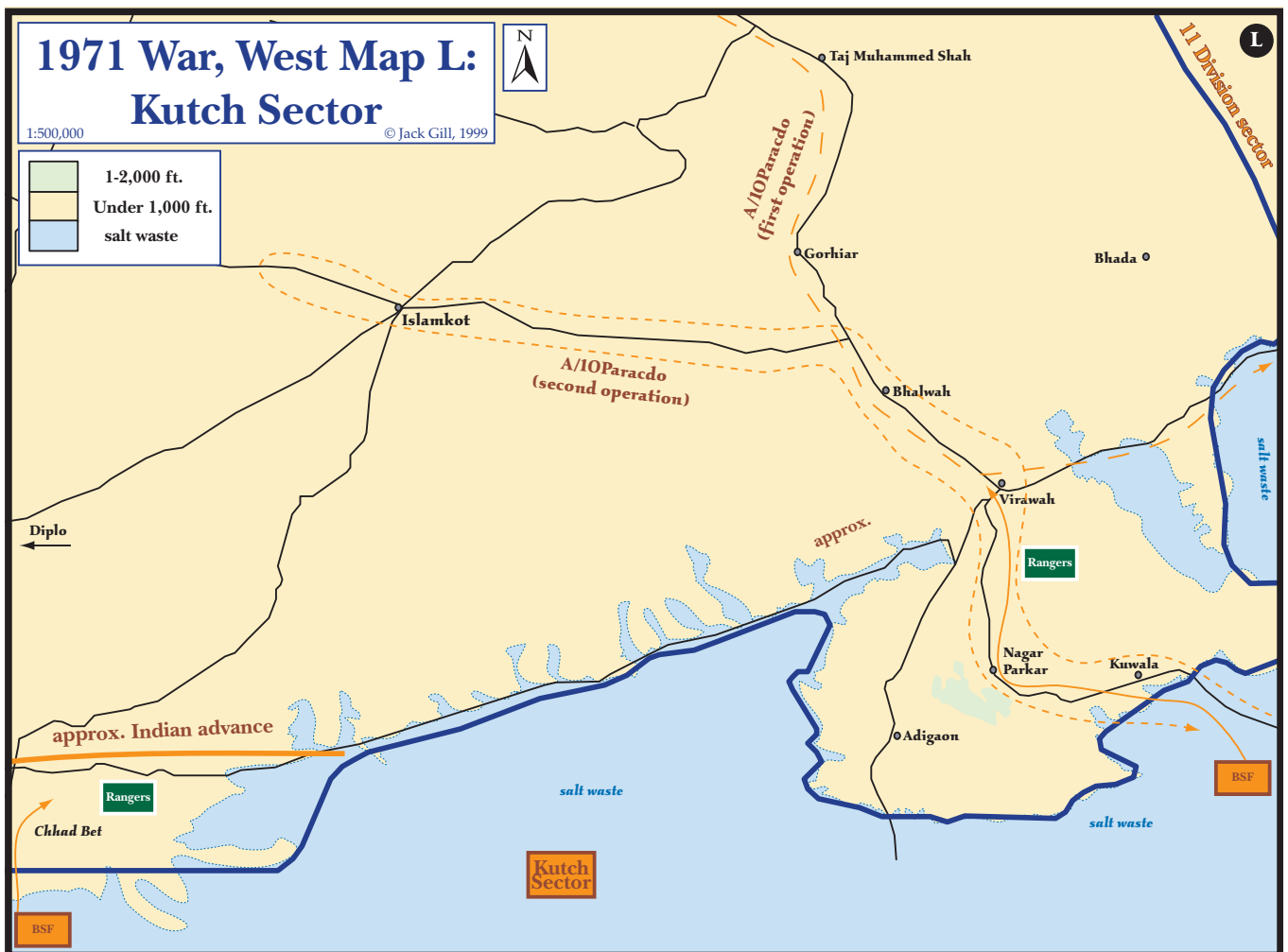
anxiety following 18 Division's failure at Longewala and the Indian drive on Naya Chor, caused Pakistan's high command to deplete II Corps by sending 33 Division south with two of its brigades. This move, combined with the detachment of 33 Division's other brigade to I Corps, effectively diminished II Corps' offensive power by one-third and thus reduced the threat it could pose to India in the Ferozpur-Fazilka area. On the other hand, General Bewoor was in the process of shifting 322 Brigade of 12 Division to reinforce 11 Division almost at the same time as the Pakistani moves were taking place.

### Western Front: Kutch Sector

The Rann of Kutch, an inhospitable salt waste, separates India and Pakistan at the southern extremes of their border. Although no regular troops were available on the Indian side at the start of hostilities in this sector, two BSF battalions succeeded in making considerable advances against light opposition from Pakistani Rangers. Thanks to their efforts, by 17 December, India controlled two large islands of elevated desert above the salt flats (Chhad Bet and the area south of Virawah).<sup>131</sup>

The Indian 10 Paracommando Battalion conducted successful raids as far as Islamkot in this sector.

In all, Southern Command ended the war in occupation of a significant chunk of Pakistani territory, albeit unproductive desert, and had distracted key elements of Pakistan's strategic reserve. It had not, however, reached Pakistan's "green belt" along the Indus as had been hoped by some Indian planners at the war's beginning.



## 4. Air and Naval Operations

### The Air War

As in the previous two wars, the actions of the two armies determined the outcome of the 1971 conflict. The rival air forces, however, played an important strategic role and influenced the tactical situation on several occasions.<sup>132</sup>

The Indian Air Force entered the 1971 conflict with a significant advantage in numbers and a determination to avenge the setbacks it had suffered in 1965. Furthermore, the PAF could not trust the approximately 4,000 ethnic Bengali personnel in its ranks and suffered a serious loss of



expertise when it withdrew these men from active duty (35 pilots and about 25% of its maintenance personnel).

The IAF's superiority was particularly apparent in the east, where eleven Indian combat squadrons rapidly overwhelmed the 16 Sabre VIs and three RT-33s available to Air Commodore Inamul Haq Khan's No. 14 Squadron. Although the Pakistani fighters made valiant efforts to counter Indian air power on 22 November and again between 3 and 6 December, their attempts were quixotic. The IAF shot down a few Sabres in air-to-air engagements, but achieved its best results by concentrating its attacks on Tejgaon airfield at Dacca, the lone fighter-capable PAF facility in East Pakistan. The Indians had effectively cratered the runway by 6 December and, as continued bombing prevented adequate repairs, the remaining Pakistani Sabres became unusable. Consequently, the Indians were able to devote 1,178 of 1,978 sorties in the east to direct support of the ground forces, that is, about 80 sorties per day from 3 to 15 December. The IAF also transported 2 Para for its airdrop at Tangail, and its helicopters made a key contribution in enabling IV Corps to cross the Meghna during the drive to Dacca. Toward the end of the campaign, restless IAF transport pilots used two old Canadian Caribous on nuisance night bombing raids over Dacca.<sup>133</sup> The Pakistan Army kept many of its helicopters in the east operational for the duration of the conflict, and several escaped to Burma in the last desperate hours of 16 December just before the surrender.<sup>134</sup>

In the west, Pakistan opened the war by launching air strikes against several key targets on the evening of 3 December. In addition to inflicting damage on bases and aircraft, it was hoped that these early "provocative" strikes would spur the IAF to hasty retaliatory raids allowing Pakistani fighters and air defenses to engage the Indians under advantageous conditions.<sup>135</sup> The PAF aircraft reached their targets undetected, but their accuracy was poor and almost no damage resulted from these initial raids or from a number B-57 missions flown later that night. The effects of these opening strikes were limited to shutting down or impeding Indian operations from a few airfields for a few hours. Moreover, the PAF only managed to generate some 20 to 30 sorties in these critical initial strikes, rather than the 400 or so it should have been able to organize with the 250 combat aircraft available in the west (12 combat squadrons). Having planned for a six-month war, it continued to fight conservatively, even withholding four squadrons for future use in support of the anticipated Army ground offensive.<sup>136</sup>

For its part, the IAF dedicated considerable effort to counter-air strikes during the first week of the war, but shifted its emphasis to interdiction and close air support in the second week, having concluded that the losses incurred in counter-air missions were not commensurate with the gains.<sup>137</sup> Indeed, IAF losses in the west, as in the east, in large measure came from antiaircraft fire (35 of 56 lost); there were only a dozen or so "classic" air-to-air engagements. The IAF also successfully struck facilities around Karachi, albeit with only sketchy coordination with the Navy. Air Force attacks on 4 and 5 December helped pave the way for the Navy's first missile strike, and bombs dropped by Canberras of No. 35 Squadron on 8 December caused much of the damage at the oil facilities near the city.<sup>138</sup>

The most spectacular incident in the air war was the IAF's central role in repelling the Pakistani 18 Division's advance toward Longewala. When Indian 12 Division called for help, the IAF had only four Hunters available at Jaisalmer, but these aircraft carried out repeated strikes on 5 December, destroying at least 20 tanks and blunting the Pakistani offensive. The Hunters followed up the next day, harassing the vulnerable and demoralized Pakistani columns as they struggled back through the desert. Owing to poor army-air force coordination, the PAF was only dimly aware of the army's plans and was not in a position to provide suitable air cover for 18 Division. The Indian Hunters thus attacked unhindered by interference from the air. Similarly, the PAF was unable to support the Navy in the defense of Karachi against air and sea attacks.<sup>139</sup>

Two other aspects of the air war deserve mention. One was that both sides made limited use

of medium transports (PAF C-130s and IAF An-12s) as bombers in strikes against rail yards, oil facilities, and other large targets.<sup>140</sup> The other was the apparent participation of approximately ten Jordanian F-104 Starfighters on the Pakistani side in Sindh. Although some of these aircraft arrived shortly before the end of the war, it is not clear that any of them actually took part in combat missions.<sup>141</sup> Even if they did conduct combat sorties, as one PAF officer noted “They arrived too late to make any difference.”<sup>142</sup> Owing to a secret agreement with Iran, the PAF hoped for support from two squadrons of Iranian F-5s, but there is no indication that Tehran took any substantive steps to fulfill this expectation.<sup>143</sup>

### **The War at Sea**

Given the brevity of the 1971 war, naval action had little opportunity to develop. Nevertheless, the Indian Navy, anxious to redeem its reputation after 1965, played its part aggressively, helping to isolate East Pakistan and contributing to the demoralization of the west.<sup>144</sup>

Pakistan had only four seagoing patrol boats and a few auxiliary vessels in the east, but it improvised a number of small riverine craft in an effort to support the army and to control the depredations of Mukti Bahini frogmen. The Pakistanis, however, had only limited success against the Mukti Bahini, who succeeded in inflicting serious losses on commercial maritime traffic during the months leading up to open conflict.<sup>145</sup>

India’s Eastern Fleet, led by the Navy’s lone aircraft carrier (INS Vikrant), imposed a blockade on East Pakistan, launched air strikes against Cox’s Bazar and Chittagong on 4 December, and continued to harass other targets in East Pakistan through 9 December.<sup>146</sup> The fleet also bombarded Chittagong on 12 December and supported the abortive amphibious assault near Ukhia at the end of the war. There were no naval engagements, but one of the Pakistani patrol boats was sunk by an air attack and two others were scuttled by their crews to keep them out of Indian hands; the fourth, PNS Rajshahi, slipped stealthily through Pakistani minefields and along the coast to escape into Burmese waters.<sup>147</sup> Much more bitter for the Pakistan Navy was the loss of one of its submarines, the PNS Ghazi on 3 December. In an attempt to close up the port of Vishakapatnam and sink or damage INS Vikrant, the Ghazi was mining the harbor mouth and sank either after an accidental internal explosion or as a result of depth charges dropped by INS Rajput.<sup>148</sup>

On the Indian side, naval losses amounted to Padma and Palash of “Force Alpha,” two improvised patrol boats manned by Mukti Bahini sailors under Indian officers. They were lost on 10 December when they came under attack from both the Indian Air Force and Pakistani defenders during an abortive attempt to push up the Pusur River to Khulna. The remaining patrol boat, INS Panvel, withdrew safely after rescuing some of the survivors.<sup>149</sup>

In the Arabian Sea, the Indian Navy accomplished its principal mission--restricting the Pakistani surface fleet to Karachi. Furthermore, in a bold and innovative move, the Indians towed several recently acquired Osa patrol boats close to Karachi and used them to launch Styx missiles at Pakistani ships and onshore oil facilities. In their first attack on the night of 4/5 December, the Osas sank a destroyer (PNS Khaiber) and a minesweeper (PNS Muhafiz) as well as causing considerable damage ashore. Indian air attacks throughout 4 December helped to distract the defenders as well as inflicting damage. The Pakistan Navy thereafter withdrew its surface combatants inside the protected harbor, but a second Indian raid on the night of 8/9 December inflicted additional destruction on shore installations and left a navy oiler (PNS Dacca) damaged. IAF Canberra bombers also hit Karachi that night. These simultaneous strikes, though only vaguely coordinated at senior levels (the Navy and Air Force commanders on the scene were unaware of the friendly forces in the vicinity) again contributed to the Indian success, demoralizing the Pakistanis and leaving them confused about the nature and strength of their attackers.<sup>150</sup>



Although its surface ships were bottled up in Karachi after 5 December, the Pakistan Navy was able to strike back below the waves, with a Daphne class submarine, PNS Hangor, sinking an Indian frigate, INS Khukri, on 9 December. India's fleet air arm also lost an Alize ASW aircraft to a Pakistani F-104 during operations over the Arabian Sea.<sup>151</sup>

The other naval event of note was the decision by U.S. President Richard Nixon and his National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger, to send the aircraft carrier USS Enterprise and several other powerful warships toward the Bay of Bengal as Task Force 74, ostensibly to evacuate American citizens from East Pakistan.<sup>152</sup> In subsequent accounts, Nixon and Kissinger have portrayed the dispatch of the Enterprise as part of a geopolitical game to counter a perceived expansion of Soviet influence, to forestall a broader Indian attack on West Pakistan, and, most of all, to demonstrate support for China's allies in Islamabad at a time when Washington was attempting to construct a new relationship with Beijing.<sup>153</sup> Many Indians, on the other hand, saw the American move as an overtly hostile act of "nuclear gunboat diplomacy" when they saw themselves on the verge of winning what they considered to be a just war.<sup>154</sup> Whatever the explanation, the U.S. vessels departed Singapore on 13 December, and passed through the Straits of Malacca on the 14th accompanied by a great deal of publicity. By the time they approached the southern fringes of the Bay of Bengal on 15 December, however, Indian troops were closing the ring around Dacca and the war was nearly over. Moreover, the task group almost immediately altered course towards Ceylon (now Sri Lanka), and was operating off the southeast of that island by 16 December when General Niazi surrendered. The Enterprise and her escorts spent the next several weeks cruising the Indian Ocean shadowed by Soviet ships before heading for the Philippines in early January 1972. This U.S. naval show of force had little if any substantial impact on the outcome of the India-Pakistan conflict, but it generated considerable controversy at the time and left a scar that troubled U.S.-India relations for the next three decades.<sup>155</sup>

## 5. Losses

**Ground.** Most of the losses on both sides occurred among the ground forces. The Indian Army and associated paramilitary forces lost approximately 3,300 to 3,600 men killed, 8,000 to 10,000 wounded, and 900 missing or captured. Adding 100 IAF casualties and 200 men from the Navy, India's total human cost comes to somewhere between 12,500 and 14,600. Additionally, the Indian official history notes the loss of 69 tanks and 10 artillery pieces.<sup>156</sup> Recent analysis by an unofficial team of Indian specialists, gives Indian tank losses as 81 and claims that India destroyed or captured 217 Pakistani tanks, a result very similar to early assessments by the International Institute of Strategic Studies: 83 and 220 respectively.<sup>157</sup>

Pakistani casualty figures are skewed by the surrender in the east. There is also considerable variance in the few sources that specify casualties: one authoritative source, for example, lists a total of 2,700 killed (1,400 in the west, 1,300 in the east), while another reliable historian gives some 5,800 deaths in East Pakistan alone. Using the lower figure for combat deaths, Pakistan personnel losses for the period from March to December 1971 come to at least 9,100 killed, wounded, and missing in addition to approximately 79,700 military and paramilitary prisoners of war as well as 12,500 civilian internees captured in the east. The number of dead and wounded, however, may have been much higher. Pakistani ground force equipment losses included some 63 tanks and 108 artillery pieces taken in the east as well as the probable destruction of at least 100 additional tanks in the west.<sup>158</sup>

Combat losses among the various Mukti Bahini elements from late November through December are unclear, but certainly numbered at least one thousand. These, of course, were above and beyond the many thousands killed and injured as a consequence of the counterinsurgency operations in East Pakistan from March through early November.<sup>159</sup>

**Air.** Aircraft casualties on each side can only be estimated. Recent research by Indian analysts indicates Pakistan lost 50 combat aircraft and India 56 to 58 to enemy action. These numbers include planes lost in air-to-air battles, shot down by ground fire, or destroyed on the ground by air strikes. In addition, the PAF destroyed at least 13 of its own fighters at Dacca to prevent them falling into Indian hands.<sup>160</sup> These figures are similar to those in the Indian official history that lists Indian losses as 56, but claims 75 "confirmed" losses for Pakistan (including those destroyed by the PAF at Dacca). The IAF lists another 15 of their own as destroyed or damaged owing to accidents.<sup>161</sup> Pakistani accounts list their own aircraft casualties to enemy action as only 24; they claim approximately 104 aircraft kills against the IAF.<sup>162</sup> Pakistani losses to accidents are unknown.

**Naval.** Both sides' naval losses were relatively small, if painfully felt. Although the two Mukti Bahini patrol boats, Padma and Palash, were destroyed in East Pakistan, India's only major casualty was INS Khukri sunk in the Arabian Sea. Pakistan, on the other hand, lost PNS Ghazi and three of its four patrol craft in the east (one sunk and two scuttled). Additionally, ten of its small, improvised gunboats were sunk or badly damaged in the eastern theater, with the remaining ten or twelve boats falling into Indian/Bangladeshi hands. In the west, the Indians sank a destroyer and a minesweeper off Karachi, while damaging an oiler in the harbor and causing significant injury to shore installations.

## 6. Legacy

The 1971 war left a legacy whose significance remains potent today.

For Bangladesh, it is the great war of liberation, the founding event of the state and central to national identity. Nonetheless, frictions between “freedom fighters” who struggled for independence and “loyalists” who sided with Pakistan in 1971 have been a recurrent theme in domestic politics. Furthermore, Bangladesh has been host to several hundred thousand so-called “Biharis” since 1971. These people, non-Bengalis trapped in the new country after the war, have lived a precarious existence in refugee camps for the past three decades awaiting resettlement in Pakistan. They have thus become a domestic issue in Bangladesh as well as a bilateral problem between Dhaka and Islamabad. Although the passage of time and President Musharraf’s conciliatory gestures in 2002 have muted some of the rhetoric, Pakistan-Bangladesh relations also continue to labor under the shadow of mutual recriminations over the question of alleged mass atrocities during 1971.

India emerged the undisputed military victor in the war, but soon found that the political fruits were not as satisfying as it might have hoped. In the east, relations with Bangladesh soured after an initial honeymoon period and have remained problematic and frequently tense.<sup>163</sup> In the west, the Simla Agreement did not “solve” the Kashmir problem and the fragmentation of Pakistan did not substantially reduce Indian perceptions of Pakistan as a threat; indeed, some have argued that the elimination of East Pakistan simplified Pakistan’s security problem and made the country more sound from a strategic standpoint. Moreover, few Indians seem to have recognized the depth of Pakistani enmity after the 1971 defeat and the serious challenge that this would pose to Indian diplomacy and security policy in the wake of the conflict. Internationally, the war reaffirmed the close ties between Moscow and New Delhi, while introducing a frequently painful degree of acrimony into U.S.-Indian relations.

Pakistan suffered the most from the war. The loss of half the country was nothing less than traumatic, leaving a deep well of bitterness over the Indian invasion of the east and especially over Indian support to the Mukti Bahini before the outbreak of full-scale hostilities. For many Pakistanis, the war reinforced their conviction that India intended somehow to “undo Partition” and fragment Pakistan. The impact on the Pakistan Army was particularly severe.<sup>164</sup> Though not insurmountable, this bitterness complicates India-Pakistan relations and serves as a convenient tool for those who wish to undermine attempts towards dialogue. In the international arena, the war confirmed Pakistan’s suspicions of Russia and its faith in its “all-weather” association with China (even though Beijing provided little material assistance). As for relations with the U.S., the experiences of 1971 are seen by Pakistanis as another instance of Washington failing to support Pakistan in a moment of national crisis.

In military terms, the 1971 war was generally consistent with the extant “tradition” established by the 1965 conflict. Two enduring aspects should be highlighted. First, the war was short in duration owing to international pressures and limited resources on both sides. Second, although it ushered in a new nation state, the conflict did not result in a “decisive” victory for India; that is, India could not dictate terms to Pakistan and its security situation only improved marginally after the war. Indeed, neither country was likely to inflict a “decisive” defeat upon its foe in 1971, a situation that remains fundamentally the same today and is unlikely to alter significantly in the near term.<sup>165</sup> However, a future conflict, whether sparked by infiltration across the LOC from Pakistan or an attempt to implement India’s worrying “limited war” concept, would almost certainly entail much higher costs in lives and property even if it could be kept at the conventional level. Meanwhile the possibility of nuclear escalation means that the consequences of any outbreak of fighting are incalculably more terrifying than in 1971.

Having colored the perceptions of the three major actors in this sanguinary drama for the past 30 years, the 1971 India-Pakistan war remains relevant today and shows no inclination to diminish in importance. It deserves our continued attention, and it is hoped that this study will make a small contribution toward a clearer understanding of its history.

## Notes to the Appendix

The following order of battle appendix (in two parts) is attached for those who wish to examine the force ratios on each side in greater depth and for those with an interest in unit history. Several explanatory notes will help the reader interpret the data and understand its limitations.

**Accuracy and completeness.** These orders of battle are as accurate as the available published sources allow and are reasonably reliable at the brigade level and higher. That is, all corps and divisions are listed correctly, there is little question concerning most of the brigades, but only some 75% or 80% of the battalion assignments are known. Although the battalion data is incomplete, all known battalion locations are given as a starting point for other researchers. Information that seems likely but is not confirmed is indicated by question marks. For clarity and manageability, only infantry battalions, armored regiments, and paramilitary troops attached to regular formations are listed below brigade level.

**Changes during the war.** The data here represents a snapshot in time at the start of the all-out war on 3 December 1971. Both sides, however, shifted brigades and battalions frequently during the course of the conflict; this was especially common in the Pakistan Army. Furthermore, the Pakistanis incorporated a number of brand new infantry battalions into front line formations as the war progressed. A few of these changes are indicated where they are reliably known, but many others are doubtless not recorded here. Detachments from original formations are noted in parentheses.

In addition to unit and formation designations, the appendix show the names of senior commanders (brigade and higher) where known. In cases where the initial commanders were killed, wounded, or otherwise removed from their posts, the subsequent commanders' names are shown (preceded by a ">"). Also shown is the type of tank with which each armored regiment was equipped.

### Abbreviations

Armd = Armored

Bde. = brigade

Brig. = brigadier

BSF = Border Security Force (India only)

Divn. = division

HQ = headquarters

Ind. = independent

Lt. Gen. = lieutenant general

Maj. Gen. = major general

Mtn. = mountain

para = parachute

regt = regiment

R&S = reconnaissance and surveillance (Pakistan only)

rece = reconnaissance

sqdn = squadron

SS-11 = anti-tank guided missile used by some Indian units

TA = Territorial Army (India only)

u/i = unidentified

wing = a paramilitary battalion

East Bengal Regiment = the Bengali (East Pakistani) regiment of the Pakistan Army: most battalions were in East Pakistan and fought against Pakistan. The three battalions in West Pakistan (5, 6, and 7) were not trusted by their West Pakistani colleagues and suffered heavily from desertion

**PART A: FORCES IN THE EAST  
as of 3 December 1971**

**PAKISTAN ARMY<sup>1</sup>**

**EASTERN COMMAND (Lt. Gen. Amir Abdullah Khan "Tiger" Niazi)**

**36 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. Mohammed Jamshed Khan)**

ad hoc tank sqdn (Chaffees)

93 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Abdul Qadir Khan)

33 Punjab

31 Baloch

70 Wing Rangers

71 Wing Rangers

**39 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. M. Rahim Khan)**

21 Azad Kashmir (one company with each brigade)

53 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Mohammed Aslam Niazi)

15 Baloch

39 Baloch

91 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Mian Taskin-ud-Din)

2 x companies of 24 Frontier Force

EPCAF elements

1 x Pakistan Rangers battalion

1 x Mujahid battalion

97 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Ata Mohammed Khan Malik)

24 Frontier Force (minus two companies)

48 Baloch

2 Commando Battalion

60 Wing Rangers

61 Wing Rangers

Marine battalion (formed by Pakistan Navy, guarding Chittagong airport)

117 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Sheikh Mansoor Hussain Atif)

23 Punjab

30 Punjab

25 Frontier Force

2 x companies of 12 Azad Kashmir

**14 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. Qazi Abdul Majid Khan)**

34 Punjab (R&S)

27 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Muhammad Saadullah Khan)

4 x tanks (3 x PT-76 and one Chaffee)<sup>2</sup>

12 Frontier Force

33 Baloch

12 Azad Kashmir (minus two companies)

202 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Muhammad Saleemullah)

31 Punjab

91 Mujahid (minus two companies)

Khyber Rifles

Thal Scouts

Tochi Scouts

<sup>1</sup>Compiled from: Jacob, 184-90; Matinuddin, 348-50; Riza, 134-59; Sandhu, 426-28, Prasad.

<sup>2</sup>Some sources refer to the tanks of 14 Division as 8 Independent Armored Squadron.

313 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Iftikhar Rana)  
30 Frontier Force  
22 Baloch  
elements/Tochi Scouts  
two companies/91 Mujahid

16 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. Nazar Hussain Shah)  
29 Cavalry (three sqdns) (Chaffees)  
34 Punjab (R&S)  
23 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Iqbal Mohammed Shafi)  
8 Punjab  
25 Punjab  
48 Punjab  
26 Frontier Force  
86 Mujahid  
34 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Mir Abdul Nayeem)  
32 Punjab  
32 Baloch  
one company/12 Punjab  
205 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Tajammul Hussain Malik)  
4 Frontier Force  
13 Frontier Force  
3 Baloch

9 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. Muhammad Husain Ansari)  
3 Independent Armored Squadron (Chaffees, approx. four tanks)<sup>3</sup>  
6 Punjab  
21 Punjab (R&S)  
57 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Manzoor Ahmed)  
18 Punjab  
50 Punjab  
29 Baloch  
107 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Muhammad Hayat)  
12 Punjab (minus one company)  
15 Frontier Force  
22 Frontier Force  
38 Frontier Force  
314 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Fazl-e-Hameed)  
5 x companies Internal Security Force  
5 x East Pakistan Civil Armed Forces companies  
1 x Mujahid battalion

EAST PAKISTAN CIVIL ARMED FORCES (Maj. Gen. Mohammed Jamshed Khan)  
As of October, before the formation of 36 Division.

Dacca Sector  
13 Wing  
16 Wing  
Jessore Sector  
4 Wing  
5 Wing  
15 Wing  
Rajshahi Sector  
6 Wing  
7 Wing  
u/i Wing

<sup>3</sup>This squadron was reduced to approximately four tanks following the engagement at Garibpur on 21 November.

Rangpur Sector  
8 Wing  
9 Wing  
10 Wing  
Comilla Sector  
1 Wing  
3 Wing  
12 Wing  
Chittagong Sector  
2 Wing  
11 Wing  
14 Wing

#### PAKISTAN AIR FORCE

Air Commodore Inamul Haq Khan  
No. 14 Squadron (Sabre VI)

#### PAKISTAN NAVY

##### **EASTERN NAVAL COMMAND (Rear Admiral Mohammad Shariff)**

###### **Patrol Craft**

PNS Comilla  
PNS Jessore  
PNS Rajshahi  
PNS Sylhet  
24 improvised gunboats

Note that Submarine PNS Ghazi was in the Bay of Bengal

#### INDIA

##### **EASTERN COMMAND (Lt. Gen. Jagjit Singh Aurora)**

##### **TROOPS COMMITTED AGAINST EAST PAKISTAN**

##### **II Corps (Lt. Gen. T. N. "Tappy" Raina)**

4 Mountain Division (Maj. Gen. Mohinder Singh Barar)  
A/45 Cavalry (PT-76)  
7 Mountain Brigade (Brig. Zail Singh)  
22 Rajput  
5 Jat  
Naga Regiment  
41 Mountain Brigade (Brig. A. E. "Tony" Michigan)  
5 Guards  
9 Dogra  
5/1 Gorkha Rifles  
62 Mountain Brigade (Brig. Rajendra Nath)  
5 Maratha Light Infantry  
4 Sikh Light Infantry  
2/9 Gorkha Rifles

9 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. Dalbir Singh)  
45 Cavalry (PT-76) (A Squadron detached to 4 Mtn Divn)



B/63 Cavalry (T-55)  
32 Infantry Brigade (Brig. M. Tewari)  
    7 Punjab (mechanised -- SKOTs)  
    8 Madras  
    13 Dogra  
42 Infantry Brigade (Brig. J. S. Gharaya > Brig. K. L. Kochar)  
    14 Punjab  
    19 Maratha Light Infantry  
    2 Sikh Light Infantry  
350 Infantry Brigade (Brig. H. S. Sandhu)  
    26 Madras  
    4 Sikh  
    1 Jammu and Kashmir Rifles

#### **IV Corps (Lt. Gen. Sagat Singh)**

8 Mountain Division (Maj. Gen. K. V. Krishna Rao)  
    5 ad hoc Ind Armd Sqdn (Ferrets)  
    84 BSF  
    85 BSF  
    93 BSF  
    104 BSF  
59 Mountain Brigade (Brig. C. A. "Bunty" Quinn)  
    9 Guards  
    6 Rajput  
    4/5 Gorkha Rifles  
    1 East Bengal Regiment  
81 Mountain Brigade (Brig. Raja C. V. Apte)  
    3 Punjab  
    4 Kumaon  
    10 Mahar  
    8 East Bengal Regiment  
Echo Sector (Brig. M. B. Wadke)  
    5/5 Gorkha Rifles  
    86 BSF  
    3 East Bengal Regiment  
BSF Sector (Brig. Kulwant Singh)  
    87 BSF

23 Mountain Division (Maj. Gen. R. D. "Rocky" Hira)  
    1 Ind. Armd. Sqdn (PT-76)  
61 Mountain Brigade/57 Division (Brig. K. P. "Tom" Pande)  
    7 Rajputana Rifles  
    2 Jat  
    12 Kumaon  
83 Mountain Brigade (Brig. Bhupinder S. Sandhu)  
    2 Rajput  
    3 Dogra  
    8 Bihar  
    9 East Bengal Regiment  
181 Mountain Brigade (Brig. Y. P. "Yash" Bakshi)  
    6 Jat  
    9 Kumaon  
    14 Kumaon  
301 Mountain Brigade (Brig. Harinder Singh Sohdi)  
    14 Jat  
    3 Kumaon

1/11 Gorkha Rifles  
Kilo Force (Brig. Anand Saroop)  
31 Jat  
32 Mahar  
4 East Bengal Regiment  
10 East Bengal Regiment

57 Mountain Division (Maj. Gen. Ben F. Gonsalves)  
5 Ind Armd Sqdn (PT-76)  
61 Mountain Brigade (Brig. K. P. "Tom" Pande) (detached to 23 Division)  
7 Rajputana Rifles  
2 Jat  
12 Kumaon  
73 Mountain Brigade (Brig. Tuli)  
14 Guards  
19 Punjab  
19 Rajputana Rifles  
311 Mountain Brigade (Brig. R. N. Mishra)  
4 Guards  
18 Rajput  
10 Bihar (detached to Sierra Force)  
Sierra Force  
10 Bihar  
2 East Bengal Regiment  
11 East Bengal Regiment

Special Frontier Force (Maj. Gen. Sujan Singh Uban)

### **XXXIII Corps (Lt. Gen. Mohan L. Thapan)**

HQ Brigadier Armour XXXIII Corps (Brig. Gurcharn Singh Sandhu)  
63 Cavalry (T-55) (B Squadron detached to 9 Division)  
69 Armoured (PT-76)  
6 Mountain Division (Maj. Gen. P. C. Reddy) (initially Army HQ reserve for Bhutan)  
9 Mountain Brigade (Brig. Tirath Verma)  
5 Grenadiers (detached to 71 Bde on 14 December)  
4 Rajput  
12 Garhwal Rifles  
99 Mountain Brigade  
18 Sikh  
11 Garhwal Rifles  
16 Kumaon  
20 Mountain Division (Maj. Gen. Lachman Singh Lehl)  
66 Mountain Brigade (Brig. G. S. Sharma)  
1 Guards  
6 Guards  
17 Kumaon  
165 Mountain Brigade (Brig. Raghuvir S. Pannu)  
20 Maratha Light Infantry (mechanized) (SKOTs)  
16 Rajput  
6 Assam  
202 Mountain Brigade (Brig. Farhat P. Bhatti)  
8 Guards

22 Maratha Light Infantry  
5 Garhwal Rifles  
340 Mountain Brigade Group (Brig. Joginder Singh Bakshi)  
4 Madras  
2/5 Gorkha Rifles  
5/11 Gorkha Rifles

71 Mountain Brigade/8 Mountain Division (Brig. Pran Nath Kathpalia)  
(under XXXIII Corps initially, under 6 Mountain Division as of 5 December)  
D (ad hoc)/69 Cavalry (PT-76)  
7 Maratha Light Infantry  
12 Rajputana Rifles  
21 Rajput  
12 Garhwal Rifles  
107 Infantry Battalion (TA)  
73 BSF  
75 BSF  
78 BSF  
82 BSF  
103 BSF  
5 Grenadiers/9 Mtn Bde (from 14 December)

50 Para Brigade (Brig. Mathew Thomas)  
2 Para  
7 Para  
8 Para

Bengal Area (Maj. Gen. P. Chowdry)  
1/3 Gorkha Rifles (later to Romeo Force)  
11 Bihar (two companies later to Romeo Force)

Romeo Force (Brig. S. S. Rai)  
1/3 Gorkha Rifles  
two companies/11 Bihar

101 Communications Zone (Maj. Gen. Gurbax Singh Gill > Maj. Gen. Gandharva C. Nagra)  
95 Mountain Brigade/8 Mountain Division (Brig. Hardev Singh Kler)  
13 Guards  
1 Maratha Light Infantry  
13 Rajputana Rifles  
5/5 Gorkha Rifles (detached to Echo Force)  
5 Mountain Brigade/2 Mtn Divn (released for employment on 8 December)  
2 Rajput  
2 Dogra  
2 Garhwal Rifles  
167 Mountain Brigade/8 Mtn Divn (Brig. Adi A. Irani)  
(released for employment on 8 December)  
6 Sikh Light Infantry  
7 Bihar  
10 Jammu and Kashmir Rifles  
FJ Sector (Brig. Sant "Baba" Singh)  
6 Bihar (from 167 Brigade)  
83 BSF

## TROOPS ON THE CHINA BORDER

### XXXIII Corps (Rear HQ under Corps Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. J. S. Nakai)

17 Mountain Division

27 Mountain Division

303 Mountain Brigade/8 Mountain Division

164 Mountain Brigade

9 Grenadiers

1 Assam

2/1 Gorkha Rifles

### IV Corps (Rear HQ under Corps Chief of Staff Maj. Gen. O. P. Malhotra)

2 Mountain Division (Maj. Gen. Gandharva C. Nagra)

5 Mtn Bde detached on 8 December

5 Mountain Division

167 Mtn Bde detached on 8 December

### Uttar Pradesh/Tibet Border

one brigade of 6 Mountain Division

## TROOPS ON COUNTERINSURGENCY DUTY

### Nagaland and Manipur (Maj. Gen. Jagjit Singh)

56 Brigade/8 Mountain Division

Assam Rifles

### Mizo Hills Range (regular battalions later assigned to Kilo Force)

31 Jat

14 Mahar (formerly 31 Mahar)

Assam Rifles

BSF

## BORDER SECURITY FORCE TROOPS ON THE EAST PAKISTAN BORDER

### in Hilli (301 Brigade) Sector

70 BSF

74 BSF

77 BSF

### in 71 Brigade Sector

70 BSF

74 BSF

77 BSF

## BANGLADESH (MUKTI BAHINI FIELD FORCES)

(Colonel M. Ataul Ghani Osmani)

### Z Force or 1 East Bengal Brigade (Major Ziaur Rahman)

1 East Bengal Regiment

3 East Bengal Regiment

8 East Bengal Regiment

### S Force (Major Safiullah)

2 East Bengal Regiment

11 East Bengal Regiment

**K Force (Major Khalid Musharraf)**

4 East Bengal Regiment  
9 East Bengal Regiment  
10 East Bengal Regiment

**INDIAN AIR FORCE**

**EASTERN AIR COMMAND (Air Marshal H. C. Dewan)**

No. 4 Squadron (MiG-21)  
No. 7 Squadron (Hunter)  
No. 14 Squadron (Hunter)  
No. 15 Squadron (Gnat)  
No. 17 Squadron (Hunter)  
No. 22 Squadron (Gnat)  
No. 24 Squadron (Gnat)  
No. 28 Squadron (MiG-21)  
No. 30 Squadron (MiG-21)  
No. 37 Squadron (Hunter)  
No. 221 Squadron (Su-7)

**CENTRAL AIR COMMAND (Air Marshal Maurice Barker)<sup>4</sup>**

No. 16 Squadron (Canberra)

**INDIAN NAVY**

**EASTERN NAVAL COMMAND (Vice Admiral N. "Midnight" Krishnan)**

**Eastern Fleet (Rear Admiral Srihari Lal Sarma)**

**Aircraft Carrier**

INS Vikrant (flag)

300 Squadron (Sea Hawk)

310 Squadron (Alize)

**Destroyer**

INS Rajput

**Frigates**

INS Brahmaputra

INS Beas

**Patrol Vessels**

INS Kamorta

INS Kavaratti

**Patrol Craft**

INS Panvel

INS Pulicat

INS Panaji

INS Akshay

Padma (Mukti Bahini)

Palash (Mukti Bahini)

<sup>4</sup>Central Air Command was responsible for bombers, airlift, maritime operations, and strategic reconnaissance in east and west (Lal, 293).

**Submarine**

INS Kalvari

**Landing Craft**

INS Magar

INS Gharial

INS Gulda

**PART B: FORCES IN THE WEST**

as of 3 December 1971

**PAKISTAN ARMY**

**Commander-in-Chief: General Agha Mohammed Yahya Khan**

**Chief of Staff : General Abdul Hamid Khan**

**FRONTIER CORPS (headquarters in Gilgit)**

1, 2, 3 Wings Karakoram Scouts

1, 2 Wings Northern Scouts

1 x wing Gilgit Scouts

**12 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. Akbar Khan)**

51 Punjab (division reserve)

six Frontier Corps wings (= battalions)

1 Azad Kashmir Infantry Brigade (Brig. Atta Muhammad Malik? > Brig. Akbar?)

2 Frontier Force (Guides)

16 Azad Kashmir (detached to 26 Brigade)

27 Azad Kashmir?

1 x battalion Tochi Scouts (two battalions?)

2 Azad Kashmir Infantry Brigade (Brig. Mir Ijaz "Tony" Mahmood)

5 Frontier Force

7 Azad Kashmir

18 Azad Kashmir (from 3 AK Brigade)

19 Azad Kashmir (from 5 AK Brigade)

Two companies 28 Azad Kashmir

3 Azad Kashmir Infantry Brigade (Brig. Shafi Khan)

10 Azad Kashmir

18 Azad Kashmir (detached to 2 AK Brigade)

23 Azad Kashmir

29 Azad Kashmir

5 Azad Kashmir Infantry Brigade (Brig. Raja Akbar Khan)

5 Azad Kashmir

11 Azad Kashmir

19 Azad Kashmir (detached to 2 AK Brigade)

6 Azad Kashmir Infantry Brigade (Brig. Dildar Rana)

8 Azad Kashmir

14 Azad Kashmir

17 Baloch?

51 Baloch?

26 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Javed Ilyas)

9 Azad Kashmir

16 Azad Kashmir (from 1 AK Brigade)

26 Azad Kashmir

**23 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. Eftikar Khan Janjua > Maj. Gen. Ghulam Umar > Brig. Kamal Matinuddin)**

17 Division artillery under 23 Division

- (26 Cavalry: divisional tank regiment distributed as below)  
 -- showing grouping on 4 December --  
 19 Baloch (R&S)  
 2 Ind Armd Bde (Brig. Sardar Ahmad)  
     28 Cavalry (recce rgt, T-59) -- arrived 5 December from 6 Armored Division  
     12 Independent Armd Sqdn (7 x M-36)  
     13 Azad Kashmir  
 4 Azad Kashmir Brigade (Brig. Ahmad Jamal Khan)  
     2 Azad Kashmir  
     6 Azad Kashmir  
 7 Azad Kashmir Brigade (Brig. Fazalur Rahim)  
     1 Azad Kashmir  
     4 Azad Kashmir  
     8 Azad Kashmir  
 20 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Syed Zair Hussain)  
     B Sqdn/26 Cavalry (Sherman)  
     14 Punjab  
     17 Frontier Force  
 66 Infantry Brigade/17 Division (Brig. Qamar-us-Salam Khan)  
     11 Cavalry (Frontier Force) (T-59) (from 6 Armored Division)  
     A Sqdn/26 Cavalry (Sherman)  
     4 Punjab  
     47 Punjab  
     23 Baloch  
     33 Frontier Force  
 111 Brigade (Brig. Naseerullah Babar Khan > Brig. Abdullah Malik)  
     C Sqdn/26 Cavalry (Sherman)  
     42 Punjab  
     10 Baloch  
     3 Frontier Force

#### **I CORPS (Lt. Gen. Irshad Ahmad Khan)**

- 8 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. Abdul Ali Malik)  
 (33 Cavalry detached to Changez Force)  
 21 Baloch (R&S)  
 24 Bde (Brig. Sher Ali Baz)  
     11 Baloch  
     24 Baloch  
     35 Punjab  
     40 Punjab  
     23 Frontier Force (from 10 Brigade, later detached to 14 Brigade)  
 14 (Para) Bde  
     19 Frontier Force  
     27 Frontier Force (from 54 Brigade/15 Division)  
     20 Punjab (detached to 115 Brigade)  
     27 Punjab (detached to 115 Brigade)  
 115 Bde  
     35 Punjab  
     38 Punjab  
     20 Punjab (from 14 Brigade)  
     27 Punjab (from 14 Brigade)  
     34 Frontier Force  
 Changez Force (Brig. Nisar Ahmed Khan)  
     20 Lancers (I Corps recce regt) (M-36)  
     33 Cavalry (M-47) (from 8 Division)

13 Punjab (non-motorized/ non-mechanized)  
124 Bde/33 Division (Brig. Usman Hassan) (attached on 14 December)  
11 Punjab  
35 Frontier Force  
1 Baloch

15 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. Abid Ali Zahid)

32 Cavalry  
51 Punjab (from 13 December)  
40 Frontier Force  
41 Frontier Force  
10 Infantry Brigade  
5 Baloch  
54 Infantry Brigade (division reserve)  
37 Baloch  
27 Frontier Force (detached to 8 Division)  
101 Infantry Brigade  
29 Punjab  
30 Baloch  
104 Infantry Brigade (Brig. S. M. Abbasi)  
36 Punjab  
37 Frontier Force  
7 Baloch  
34 Baloch

8 Ind Armd Bde (Brig. Mohammed Ahmad)

13 Lancers (M-47 Pattons)  
27 Cavalry (M-47 Pattons)  
31 Cavary (M-48 Pattons)  
11 Ind Armd Sqdn (M-36?)  
29 Frontier Force (M-113)

6 ARMoured DIVISION (Maj. Gen. M. I. Karim)

Brigades: 7 Armoured Brigade, 9 Armoured Brigade  
Tank Regiments (T-59s): 24 Cavalry, 25 Cavalry, (51 Lancers?)  
Detached to 23 Division: 11 Cavalry, 28 Cavalry  
Armored Infantry Battalions: ?

17 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. R. D. Shamim)

66 Infantry Brigade (detached to 23 Division)  
77 Infantry Brigade  
88 Infantry Brigade (detached to 10 Division)  
212 Infantry Brigade (detached to IV Corps on 30 November to Kanganpur area)  
50 Baloch  
30 Azad Kashmir  
31 Azad Kashmir  
315 Infantry Brigade?

**IV CORPS (Lt. Gen. Bahadur Sher)**

10 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. S. A. Z. Naqvi)

28 Punjab (R&S)  
22 Infantry Brigade (Brig. George Albert Kiernander)  
15 Punjab  
43 Baloch (detached to 88 Brigade)  
49 Baloch



53 Baloch (joined on 8 December)  
 28 Frontier Force?  
 88 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Hayat Ullah) (from 17 Division)  
   17 Punjab  
   5 East Bengal Regiment  
   40 Baloch  
   43 Baloch (from 22 Brigade)  
 114 Brigade (Brig. Zain-ul-Huda)  
   16 Punjab?  
   43 Punjab  
   18 Frontier Force  
   20 Baloch  
 103 Brigade (Brig. Sardar F. S. Lodi)  
   2 Baloch?  
   3 Baloch?  
   16 Baloch  
   53 Punjab

#### 11 INFANTRY DIVISION

19 Baloch (R&S)?  
 26 Punjab (R&S)?  
 52 Infantry Brigade (Brig. J. F. Golwalla)  
   22 Punjab  
   8 Frontier Force  
   9 Baloch?  
   25 Baloch  
   31 Azad Kashmir?  
 106 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Mohammad Mumtaz Khan) at Hussainiwala  
   B/4 Cavalry (two troops) (Pattons)<sup>5</sup>  
   3 Punjab  
   9 Punjab  
   19 Punjab?  
   41 Baloch  
 21 Brigade  
   2 Punjab  
   31 Frontier Force  
   9 Baloch?  
   50 Baloch?

3 Armoured Brigade (Ravi-Sutlej corridor)  
   4 Cavalry (M-47/M-48 Pattons) (part detached to 106 Brigade)  
   23 Cavalry (M-47/M-48 Pattons)  
   1 Frontier Force (M-113)

105 Independent Infantry Brigade (Brig. Amir Hamza) at Suliamanke  
   tank sqdn (Shermans)  
   7 Punjab  
   6 Frontier Force  
   18 Baloch  
   33 Pakpattan Mujahid  
   20 Sind Desert Rangers

212 Independent Infantry Brigade

<sup>5</sup>It is not clear whether 4 and 23 Cavalry were equipped with a mix of M-47 and M-48 tanks or whether each had only one type.

15 Lancers (IV Corps recce regiment) (T-34)  
50 Baloch  
30 Azad Kashmir  
31 Azad Kashmir

25 Independent Infantry Brigade  
5 Punjab  
24 Baloch  
36 Frontier Force

## **II CORPS (Lt. Gen. Tikka Khan)**

51 Lancers (Corps Recce Regiment) (?)<sup>6</sup>

### **1 ARMoured DIVISION**

Brigades: 4 Armoured Brigade, 5 Armoured Brigade  
Tank Regiments (all T-59s): 5 Horse (Probyn's Horse), 6 Lancers, 10 Guides Cavalry, 12 Cavalry, 19 Lancers, 30 Cavalry (10 Guides Cavalry later detached to 33 Division)  
Armored Infantry Battalions (all M-113): 7 Frontier Force

### **33 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. Ch. Naseer Ahmad)**

10 Guides Cavalry (attached prior to move to Naya Chor)  
39 Frontier Force  
u/i infantry brigade  
60 Infantry Brigade  
44 Punjab (Lt. Col. Muhammad Taj)  
45 Punjab  
46 Baloch  
124 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Usman Hassan) (detached to 8 Division on 14 December)  
11 Punjab  
35 Frontier Force  
1 Baloch

### **7 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. I. A. Akram) (Army HQ Reserve)**

6 Infantry Brigade  
39 Punjab  
13 Baloch  
44 Baloch  
102 Infantry Brigade  
116 Infantry Brigade

### **18 INFANTRY DIVISION (Maj. Gen. B. M. Mustafa > Maj. Gen. Abdul Hameed Khan)**

22 Cavalry (T-59)  
28 Baloch (R&S)  
51 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Tariq Mir)  
10 Punjab  
38 Baloch  
7 East Bengal Regiment  
206 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Jahanzeb Abab > Brig. Syed Mohammad Zaidi)  
38 Cavalry (Shermans)  
1 Punjab  
41 Punjab  
20 Frontier Force  
47 Baloch (from 15 December)  
55 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Mahmood)

<sup>6</sup>Sources vary on the disposition of this regiment.

A/38 Cavalry (Shermans)  
21 Frontier Force  
39 Frontier Force  
12 Baloch  
26 Baloch

**PAKISTAN AIR FORCE**  
**Commander-in-Chief: Air Marshal A. Rahim Khan**

No. 5 Squadron (Mirage IIIEP)  
No. 9 Squadron (F-104A)  
No. 11 Squadron (F-6)  
No. 15 Squadron (Sabre VI)  
No. 16 Squadron (F-86)  
No. 17 Squadron (Sabre VI)  
No. 18 Squadron (Sabre VI)  
No. 19 Squadron (F-86)  
No. 23 Squadron (F-6)  
No. 25 Squadron (F-6)  
No. 31 Wing (B-57B) [This was a consolidation of old No. 7 and No. 8 Squadrons.]<sup>7</sup>

**PAKISTAN NAVY**  
**Commander-in-Chief: Vice Admiral Muzaffar Hasan**

**Flotilla (Rear Admiral M. A. K. Lodi)**

**Cruiser**

PNS Babur (flag)

**Destroyers**

PNS Badr

PNS Khyber

PNS Shahjahan

PNS Alamgir

PNS Jahangir

**Frigates**

PNS Tipu Sultan

PNS Tughril

PNS Zulfiqar

**Submarines**

PNS Ghazi (dispatched to Bay of Bengal)

PNS Hangor

PNS Mangro

PNS Shushuk

**Oiler**

PNS Dacca

**Mine Sweepers**

PNS Muhafiz

PNS Mujahid

PNS Moshal

PNS Momin

PNS Mubarak

PNS Mahmood

PNS Munsif

<sup>7</sup>Rafi, 94.

## Gunboats

PNS Sadaqat

PNS Razaqat

## INDIAN ARMY

Chief of the Army Staff: General S. H. F. J. "Sam" Manekshaw

### WESTERN COMMAND (Lt. Gen. K. P. Candeth)

12 Guards (SS-11)

11 Sikh Light Infantry on airfield defense

103 Infantry Battalion (TA) on airfield defense

118 Infantry Battalion (TA) various duties in the Delhi area

124 Infantry Battalion (TA) on airfield defense

126 Infantry Battalion (TA) at Pathankot

123 Mountain Brigade (sent west from Eastern Command on 6 December)

### XV Corps (Lt. Gen. Sartaj Singh)

9 Paracommando

3 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. S. P. Malhotra)

20 Punjab

14 Dogra

4/4 Gorkha Rifles (C Company detached to Partapur Sector)

70 Brigade

114 Brigade<sup>8</sup>

Partapur Sector (Brig. Udai Singh)

Ladakh Scouts

Nubra Guards (local levy)

C Company, 4/4 Gorkha Rifles

121 Independent Infantry Brigade (Brig. M. L. Whig)

7 Guards

18 Punjab

5/3 Gorkha Rifles

2/11 Gorkha Rifles

9 Jammu & Kashmir Militia

13 Jammu & Kashmir Militia

19 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. Eustace D. D'Souza)

Gallies (or BSF) Sector (Brig. Randhawa)

1 Jammu & Kashmir Militia

3 x BSF battalions

104 Infantry Brigade

6 Rajputana Rifles

8 Rajputana Rifles

9 Sikh

3 Bihar

BSF battalion

161 Infantry Brigade (Brig. K. K. Nanda)

8 Sikh

7 Sikh Light Infantry

4 Rajputana Rifles

5 Mahar

2 Assam

<sup>8</sup>Designations of 70 and 114 Brigades based on dispositions in 1962 (Lt. Col. Gurdip Singh Kler, *Unsung Battles of 1962*, New Delhi: Lancer, 1995).

3 Maratha Light Infantry  
 two BSF battalions  
 268 Infantry Brigade (initially in reserve, later HQ Gulf Sector at Gulmarg)  
 2 Guards  
 12 Grenadiers  
 4 Mahar  
 V Sector (Maj. Gen. Patankar)  
 u/i battalion from 268 Brigade?  
 four or five BSF battalions  
 Kilo-Gulf Sector (Brig. A. J. Texeira) (Kaunrauli-Gulmarg)

25 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. Kundan Singh)  
 3 Jammu & Kashmir Militia  
 7 Mahar  
 93 Infantry Brigade (Brig. A. V. Natu)  
 6 Sikh  
 8 Jat  
 13 Mahar (from 33 Brigade)  
 1/4 Gorkha Rifles  
 11 Jammu & Kashmir Militia  
 9 BSF  
 50 BSF  
 33 Infantry Brigade/39 Infantry Division  
 13 Mahar  
 120 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Hari Singh)  
 21 Punjab  
 9 Rajputana Rifles  
 14 Grenadiers  
 6/11 Gorkha Rifles  
 80 Infantry Brigade  
 4/9 Gorkha Rifles  
 4 Garhwal Rifles  
 11 Rajputana Rifles  
 5 Sikh Light Infantry

10 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. Jaswant Singh)  
 Deccan Horse (9 Horse) (T-54)  
 51 BSF  
 57 BSF  
 28 Infantry Brigade (Brig. M. V. Natu)  
 5 Rajput  
 2 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles  
 7 Jammu & Kashmir Militia  
 8 Jammu & Kashmir Militia  
 191 Infantry Brigade (Brig. R. K. Jasbir Singh)  
 5 Sikh  
 5 Assam  
 10 Garhwal Rifles  
 4/1 Gorkha Rifles  
 68 Infantry Brigade (Brig. R. T. Morlin)  
 7 Kumaon  
 9 Jat  
 5/8 Gorkha Rifles  
 3/4 Gorkha Rifles  
 52 Infantry Brigade  
 16 Punjab  
 7 Garhwal Rifles

3/4 Gorkha Rifles (detached to 68 Brigade)  
3 Independent Armoured Brigade (Brig. B. S. Irani)  
72 Armd Regt (T-55)  
2 Ind. Armd Sqdn (AMX13)  
8 Light Cavalry (detached)  
Central Indian Horse (21 Horse) (detached)  
7 Grenadiers (BTR60) (detached)

26 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. Z. C. "Zoru" Bakshi)  
8 Light Cavalry (Vijayanta)  
Central Indian Horse (21 Horse) (T-55)  
7 Grenadiers (BTR60)  
10 Garhwal Rifles  
5 Kumaon  
4 Dogra  
9 Rajput  
19 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Mohinder Singh)  
3/5 Gorkha Rifles  
7/11 Gorkha Rifles  
11 Guards  
A/9 Paracommando  
Sqdn/8 Light Cavalry  
36 Infantry Brigade  
162 Infantry Brigade  
3/3 Gorkha Rifles  
6 Garhwal Rifles

#### **I Corps (Lt. Gen. K. K. Singh)**

X Sector (later assumed by HQ/39 Division)  
31 Independent Artillery Brigade  
323 Infantry Brigade/39 Division  
6/8 Gorkha Rifles  
19 Madras  
168 Infantry Brigade/26 Division  
2/4 Gorkha Rifles  
5 Jammu and Kashmir Rifles  
19 Madras (detached to 323 Brigade)

54 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. W. A. G. Pinto)  
6 Madras  
47 Infantry Brigade (Brig. A. P. Bharadwaj)  
16 Madras  
16 Dogra  
3 Grenadiers  
74 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Ujaggar Singh)  
8 Grenadiers  
6 Kumaon  
9 Maratha Light Infantry  
91 Infantry Brigade (Brig. A. Handoo)  
3 Garhwal Rifles  
3/1 Gorkha Rifles  
16 Independent Armoured Brigade (Brig. Arun S. Vaidya)  
Hodson's Horse (4 Horse) (Centurion)  
16 Light Cavalry (Centurion)  
Poona Horse (17 Cavalry) (Centurion)  
18 Rajputana Rifles (Topas)

90 Ind. Recce Sqdn (AMX-13)  
41 Independent Artillery Brigade

39 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. B. R. Prabhu)  
87 Infantry Brigade (to 36 Division after 12 December)  
3/9 Gorkha Rifles  
72 Infantry Brigade/36 Division (Brig. J. M. Vohra)  
1 Mahar/115 Bde/36 Division  
15 Grenadiers  
22 Punjab  
3 Sikh Light Infantry  
2 Independent Armoured Brigade (Brig. R. N. Thumbby)  
Skinner's Horse (1 Cavalry) (T-55)  
7 Light Cavalry (T-55)  
Scinde Horse (14 Cavalry) (T-55)  
1 Dogra (Topas)  
91 Ind. Recce Sqdn (AMX-13)

36 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. Balwant Singh Ahluwalia)  
18 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Prithvi Raj)  
115 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Hriday Kaul)  
4 Grenadiers  
10 Guards  
1 Mahar (detached)

#### **XI Corps (Lt. Gen. N. C. Rawlley)**

21 Independent Artillery Brigade

15 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. B. M. Bhattacharjee)  
66 Armd Regt (Vijayanta)  
86 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Gauri Shankar)  
71 Armd Regt/14 Ind Armd Bde (T-55)  
10 Dogra  
1/9 Gorkha Rifles  
4/8 Gorkha Rifles  
17 Rajput  
21 BSF  
58 Infantry Brigade/14 Division (Brig. Narinder Singh)  
24 Punjab  
96 Infantry Brigade (Brig. A. E. Joseph)  
15 Maratha Light Infantry  
8 Sikh Light Infantry  
54 Infantry Brigade (Brig. G. N. Sinha)  
2 Sikh  
9 Punjab  
11 Grenadiers  
23 BSF  
27 BSF  
38 Infantry Brigade  
16 Grenadiers  
4 Assam  
8 Garhwal Rifles

7 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. Freemantle)  
3 Cavalry (Centurions)  
5 Dogra

65 Infantry Brigade  
14 Rajput  
14 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles  
3 Madras  
48 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Menon)  
6 Mahar  
1/5 Gorkha Rifles  
9 Sikh Light Infantry  
29 Infantry Brigade  
9 Bihar  
15 Punjab (detached to 35 Brigade)  
35 Infantry Brigade/14 Division (Brig. Pran Anand)  
15 Punjab/29 Brigade/7 Division  
13 Punjab  
15 Dogra  
3 Guards  
25 BSF  
31 BSF

14 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. Harish K. Bakshi > Maj. Gen. Onkar Singh Kalkat)  
35 Infantry Brigade (detached to 7 Division initially)  
58 Infantry Brigade (detached to 15 Division)  
116 Infantry Brigade  
1 Para  
17 Madras  
3/11 Gorkha Rifles (later detached to 67 Bde)

Foxtrot (F) Sector (Maj. Gen. Ram Singh)  
70 Armd Regt (SS-11) (A Squadron detached to Southern Command)  
67 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Surjit Singh Chaudhry > Brig. G. S. Reen > Brig. Piara Singh)  
4 Ind. Armd Sqdn (Shermans)  
Sqdn/18 Cavalry/14 Armd Bde (T-54)  
4 Jat  
3 Assam  
15 Rajput  
22 BSF  
28 BSF  
115 Infantry Battalion (TA) (added on 7 December)  
51 Para Brigade (Brig. E. A. Thyagaraj)  
Sqdn/18 Cavalry/14 Armd Bde (T-54)  
3 Para  
4 Para  
11 Dogra  
Juliet Sector (defending Abohar along Gang Canal)  
C Sqdn/18 Cavalry/14 Armd Bde (T-54)  
19 Rajput  
163 Infantry Brigade  
92 Ind. Recce Sqdn (PT-76)  
5 Bihar  
2/8 Gorkha Rifles  
Abohar Fortress  
112 Infantry Battalion (TA)  
60 Engineer Regiment  
2 additional engineer regiments in infantry role

Mike Force (Col. P. C. Mehta > Brig. Gurcharn Singh Sandhu)  
18 Cavalry (- 2 sqdns) (T-54)



62 Cavalry (T-55)  
Company/1/8 Gorkha Rifles (Topas)

1 Armoured Division (Maj. Gen. Gurbachan Singh)  
93 Ind. Recce Sqdn (AMX-13)  
1 Armoured Brigade (Brig. N. S. Cheema)  
2 Lancers (Vijayanta)  
65 Armd Regt (Vijayanta)  
67 Armd Regt (Vijayanta)  
68 Armd Regt (Vijayanta)  
43 Lorried Infantry Brigade (Brig. Ramesh Chandra)  
1 Madras (Topas)  
1 Jat (Topas)  
1 Garhwal Rifles (Topas)

14 Independent Armoured Brigade (Brig. R. Christian)  
18 Cavalry (T-54) (detached to F Sector)  
62 Cavalry (T-55) (detached to F Sector)  
64 Cavalry (T-54)  
70 Armd Regt (SS-11) (detached to F Sector)  
71 Armd Regt (T-55) (detached to 15 Division)  
1/8 Gorkha Rifles (Topas) (one company detached to M Force)  
92 Ind. Recce Sqdn (PT-76) (detached to F Sector)

**SOUTHERN COMMAND (Lt. Gen. G. G. Bewoor)**

10 Paracommando  
27 Madras (later detached to Kutch Sector)  
101 Infantry Battalion (TA) at Jodhpur  
117 Infantry Battalion (TA) at Barmer  
123 Infantry Battalion (TA) in Rajasthan on airfield defense

**Kilo (Bikaner) Sector**

13 Grenadiers (camels)  
11 BSF  
12 BSF

12 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. R. K. Khambatta)  
20 Lancers (AMX-13)  
6 Ind Armd Sqdn (T-55)  
30 Infantry Brigade  
6/5 Gorkha Rifles  
17 Rajputana Rifles  
9 Jammu & Kashmir Rifles  
45 Infantry Brigade (Brig. R. O. Kharbanda)  
23 Punjab  
3 Rajputana Rifles  
8 Dogra  
14 BSF  
18 BSF (from 5/6 December)  
322 Infantry Brigade  
4 Maratha Light Infantry  
3 Jat  
13 Kumaon

11 Infantry Division (Maj. Gen. R. D. R. Anand)  
3 Ind Armd Sqdn (T-55)  
17 Grenadiers (camels)

2 Grenadiers  
17 BSF  
85 Infantry Brigade (Brig. Gurjeet Singh Randhawa)  
    2 Rajputana Rifles  
    2 Mahar  
    10 Sikh  
    10 Sikh Light Infantry  
31 Infantry Brigade  
    15 Kumaon  
    9 Madras  
    18 Madras  
    20 Rajput  
330 Infantry Brigade

**Kutch Sector**

A/70 Armd Regt (SS-11)  
2 or 3 x BSF battalions  
116 Infantry Battalion (TA)  
27 Madras (arrived approx. 17 December)

**Bhuj**

109 Infantry Battalion (TA)

**INDIAN AIR FORCE**  
**Chief of Staff: Air Chief Marshal Pratap Chandra Lal**

**WESTERN AIR COMMAND (Air Marshal M. M. Engineer)**

No. 1 Squadron (MiG-21)  
No. 2 Squadron (Gnat)  
No. 3 Squadron (Mystere)  
No. 8 Squadron (MiG-21)  
No. 9 Squadron (Gnat)  
No. 10 Squadron (Marut)  
No. 18 Squadron (Gnat)  
No. 20 Squadron (Hunter)  
No. 21 Squadron (Gnat)  
No. 23 Squadron (Gnat)  
No. 26 Squadron (Su-7)  
No. 27 Squadron (Hunter)  
No. 29 Squadron (MiG-21)  
No. 31 Squadron (Mystere)  
No. 32 Squadron (Su-7)  
No. 45 Squadron (MiG-21)  
No. 47 Squadron (MiG-21)  
No. 101 Squadron (Su-7)  
No. 108 Squadron (Su-7)  
No. 220 Squadron (Marut)  
No. 222 Squadron (Su-7)

In addition, a small number of old Vampire jet fighters and AT-6 Harvard trainers flew close air support missions out of Srinagar.

**CENTRAL AIR COMMAND (Air Marshal Maurice Barker)<sup>9</sup>**

No. 5 Squadron (Canberra)

<sup>9</sup>Central Air Command was responsible for bombers, airlift, maritime operations, and strategic reconnaissance in east and west (Lal, 293).

No. 35 Squadron (Canberra)  
No. 44 Squadron (modified An-12)  
No. 106 Squadron (Canberra)

**INDIAN NAVY**  
**Chief of Staff: Admiral S. M. Nanda**

**WESTERN NAVAL COMMAND (Vice Admiral Surendra Nath Kohli)**

**Western Fleet (Rear Admiral E. C. "Chandy" Kuruvila)**

**Cruiser**

INS Mysore (flag)

**Destroyer**

INS Ranjit

**Frigates**

INS Trishul

INS Talwar

INS Khukri

INS Kirpan

INS Kuthar

INS Cauvery

INS Kistna

INS Tir

**Patrol Vessels**

INS Kiltan

INS Katchall

INS Kadmat

**Submarines**

INS Karanj

INS Kursura

**Osa Class Patrol Boats**

Nashak

Nipat

Nirghat

Nirbhik

Vinash

Veer

Vijeta

Vidyut

**SOUTHERN NAVAL AREA (Rear Admiral V. A. Kamath)**

**Destroyers**

INS Godavari

INS Ganga

**Submarine Tender**

INS Amba

Compiled from: Jacob, 184-90; Matinuddin, 348-50; Riza, 134-59; Sandhu, 426-28, Prasad.

## Endnotes

- 1 Though somewhat dated, the excellent study by Sisson and Rose remains the best analysis of the conflict from a diplomatic perspective: Richard Sisson and Leo E. Rose, *War and Secession: Pakistan, India, and the Creation of Bangladesh* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990). A modern study of encompassing all of the India-Pakistan wars and placing them in political context is Sumit Ganguly's comprehensive *Conflict Unending* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001).
- 2 In addition to Sisson/Rose and Ganguly, see Robert V. Jackson's early but thorough study *South Asian Crisis: India, Pakistan and Bangla Desh* (London: Praeger, 1975), 14-32, 146-49.
- 3 Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, the powerful leader of the Pakistan People's Party, played a crucial role during the entire period. The PPP had won the elections in the west in 1970, and the ambitious Bhutto, the prospective prime minister, complicated the Pakistani domestic political scene as he maneuvered -- sometimes in coordination with Yahya, more often on his own -- to secure a dominant position for his party and his own political future.
- 4 Searchlight was an update of an earlier plan called "Operation Blitz." An insightful recent summary of events and attitudes inside both halves of Pakistan is Hamid Hussain, "Demons of December -- Road from East Pakistan to Bangladesh," *Defence Journal*, December 2002.
- 5 "Mujibnagar" ("Mujib City") was the euphemistic name given to the Awami headquarters in Indian West Bengal, eventually moved to an office in Calcutta. There is some controversy concerning the exact timing of the declaration of independence with some commentators arguing that it was actually made on 27 March. See "Zia Read Out Declaration of Independence on March 27, not on 26," *The Independent*, 21 January 2002; Anwarul Islam, "March 1971," *Alochna Magazine*, April 2002; A. M. Kais Chowdhury, letter to the editor, *Holiday*, 28 June 2002.
- 6 For a Bangladeshi perspective, see Maj. Rafiqul Islam, *A Tale of Millions: Bangladesh Liberation War 1971* Dhaka: Ananna, 1995).
- 7 Sisson and Rose, 134-43, 179-81. Estimates of the number of refugees generally vary between three million (Pakistani contention) and ten million (Indian figure). In either case, it was a huge body of displaced, homeless people, most of them Hindus. See also Jackson, 81; and S. N. Prasad, ed., *History of Indo-Pak War, 1971* (New Delhi: Government of India, 1992), published on the web by *The Times of India*, October 2001, >[www.timesofindia.com](http://www.timesofindia.com)<, 149, 194. Some Bangladeshis maintain that Indian fears about communist/leftist unrest made New Delhi cautious in supplying weapons to the Mukti Bahini: Helal Uddin Ahmed, "Armed Resistance in the War of Independence," *The Independent*, 31 July 2002.
- 8 Subrahmanyam quoted in Sisson and Rose, 149-50. His opinions appeared in several Indian newspapers starting on 31 March and 5 April; some remarks were then reported in the *Times* of London in July. Sisson and Rose offer a thorough discussion of the facts surrounding Subrahmanyam's statements, citing the incident as another example of "The tendency in both India and Pakistan to look for 'worst case' interpretations of each other's behavior." Other Subrahmanyam quotes and commentary in Prasad, 110, and Maj. Gen. Sukhwant Singh, *The Liberation of Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1981), 93-99. To support the contention that India sought to break up Pakistan, Pakistani commentators often cite the so-called "Agartala conspiracy," a case of alleged sedition involving Sheikh Mujib and named for the Indian city of Agartala where he is said to have met with Indian agents during 1966.
- 9 J. N. Dixit, *India-Pakistan in War & Peace* (New Delhi: Books Today, 2002), 182-83.
- 10 The 29 April date is from Manekshaw's comments to the press in 1999: "Manekshaw Retreads Thin Red Line Between Field Marshal, Dismissal," *Indian Express*, 10 May 1999; and "When Sam Quoted Chapter and Verse to Mrs. Gandhi," May 1999, Rediff on the Net, >[www.rediff.com/news/1999/may/10shaw.htm](http://www.rediff.com/news/1999/may/10shaw.htm)<. Manekshaw is quoted at length on this topic in a 1996 interview published as an appendix in Maj. Gen. J. F. R. Jacob, *Surrender at Dacca: Birth of a Nation* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1997), 181-83. See also Arvind Singh, "Field Marshal S. H. F. J. Manekshaw," *Journal of the United Services Institution of India*, October-December 2001. For more on the military's replies to Gandhi, see Sisson and Rose, 145, 209. Also Pupul Jayakar, *Indira Gandhi* (New Delhi: Viking, 1992), 223-24, who gives the date of the talk with Manekshaw as 25 April. This summary largely follows Sisson and Rose, supplemented by Prasad, Chapters III

through V. One source claims that the instructions to prepare for war were given as early as 6 April 1971: A. G. Noorani, "The 1971 Watershed," *Frontline*, November 25 - December 8, 2000.

11 Sisson and Rose (187) note four elements in the Indian policy by late spring 1971: return of all refugees, transfer of power to a moderate Awami League administration in East Pakistan, use of force as necessary -- starting with support to the Mukti Bahini, but retaining the option to escalate to direct intervention -- and mobilization of international support. For a recent Indian view of diplomacy during this period, see J. N. Dixit, *Across Borders: Fifty Years of India's Foreign Policy* (New Delhi: Picus, 1998), 97-113.

12 Maj. Gen. Shaukat Riza, *The Pakistan Army 1966-71* (Dehra Dun: Natraj, 1977), 110. Shaukat Riza commanded 9 Infantry Division in East Pakistan in early 1971.

13 It is unlikely that the Mukti Bahini, even with covert Indian help, could have evicted the Pakistan Army from Bangladesh through a military "victory." Though speculation is perhaps otiose in this case, the stage seemed set for bloody, interminable stalemate.

14 For the view from the Pakistan side, see Maj. Gen. Fazal Muqem Khan, *Pakistan's Crisis in Leadership* (New Delhi: Alpha & Alpha, 1973), 56-104; Shaukat Riza, 73-117; Siddiq Salik, *Witness to Surrender* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1978), 71-106. Lieutenant General Niazi, brought in as Commander of Pakistan's Eastern Command in early April, offers the thesis that Pakistani President Yahya Khan and Zulfikar Ali Bhutto "engineered" the loss of East Pakistan in order to retain power in the west, see Gen. A. A. K. Niazi, *The Betrayal of East Pakistan* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1998), xiv-xvi. An interesting Bangladeshi viewpoint is in Muntassir Mamoon *The Vanquished Generals and the Liberation War of Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Somoy Prokashan, 2002), which contains a series of interviews with key Pakistani participants.

15 See, for example, incidents related by a Pakistani pilot in Brig. Sher Khan, "Last Flight from East Pakistan," *Defence Journal*, February 2001.

16 J. N. Dixit recalls one senior official telling Mrs. Gandhi that Pakistan had done "exactly what one had expected" (*India-Pakistan*, 209).

17 Some American media reporting (*New York Times* and *Wall Street Journal*) from the middle of December 1971 can be found on the web site of the South Asian Journalists Association (SAJA) at ><http://saja.org/dissect/1971.html><.

18 For contemporary American views on the burgeoning crisis, see the collection of U.S. official reports, assessments, and policy memoranda published in Roedad Khan, ed., *The American Papers* (Karachi: Oxford University Press), 1999, 449-779; and Sajit Gandhi, ed., "The Tilt: The U.S. and the South Asian Crisis of 1971," National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 79, 16 December 2002, at >[www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB79/index2/htm](http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB79/index2/htm)<.

19 See, for example, Dixit, *India-Pakistan*, 183-206.

20 Jackson, 129, 140-41; Sisson and Rose, 217. Dixit (110) points out that the attitude of the Soviet Union, which opposed the dissolution of Pakistan, was an important factor in New Delhi's calculations. The topic was certainly debated in senior circles in New Delhi, and some of Mrs. Gandhi's advisors urged a continuation of the war, but the Prime Minister had the final word (Sisson and Rose, 306; Jayakar, 241-42). The Indian Chief of the Air Staff, Air Chief Marshal Pratap C. Lal, recorded that "our government did not intend, at any time, to destroy the power of Pakistan in the west," in Air Chief Marshal Pratap C. Lal, *My Years with the IAF* (New Delhi: Lancer, 1986), 172.

21 For military planning considerations, see Prasad, 117, 278-85. Political points, especially India's confidence that China would not intervene, are from Sisson and Rose, 216; also John W. Garver, *Protracted Contest: Sino-Indian Rivalry in the Twentieth Century* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1998), 207-13; and an on-line chat with Aurora: "The Lt. General Jagjit Singh Aurora Chat," *Rediff on the Net*, 13 December 1996, >[www.rediff.com/chat/aurochat1.htm](http://www.rediff.com/chat/aurochat1.htm)<.

22 Pakistan's strategic defense concept was outlined in War Directive No. 4, dated 9 August 1967. See Part IV, Chapters II and III of the *Hamoodur Rahman Commission Report*, Government of Pakistan, 1972, published on the web by *The Dawn*, 2001, >[www.dawn.com/report/hrc/](http://www.dawn.com/report/hrc/)< [hereafter *HRC Report*]. On the lack of equipment and manpower reserves, see Part IV, Chapter V.

23 Key sources include: Col. Brian Cloughley, *A History of the Pakistan Army* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 155-84; Maj. Agha Humayun Amin, "Handling of Armour in Indo-Pak War," *Defence Journal*, August 2000; Shaukat Riza, 165-66; Fazal Muqem Khan, 105-14; Sisson and Rose, 221-25; Jackson, 160. One Pakistani commentator noted bitterly that "there had been no known strategy, no delineation of national aims, no concerted preparation for war, no assessment of the conduct, consequences and the cost of the war: there had only been stubbornness tragically mistaken for resolution" (Brig. A. R. Siddiqi, "1971 Curtain-Raiser," *Pakistan Army Journal*, December 1977); see also his "The War of Self-Attrition," *Pakistan Army Journal*, December 1978. Also Gen. Khalid Mahmud Arif, *Khaki Shadows* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), 127-29.

24 *HRC Report Supplement*, Part III, Chapter VIII; Lt. Gen. M. Attiqur Rahman, *Back to the Pavilion* (Karachi: Cowasjee, 1990), 241; Maj. Mumtaz Hussain Shah, "The Battle of Sylhet Fortress," *Defence Journal*, January 1999; Brig. Saadullah Khan, *East Pakistan to Bangladesh* (Lahore: Lahore Law Times Publications, 1975), 142, 182.

25 Fazal Muqem Khan, 16-31; Lt. Gen. Gul Hassan Khan, *Memoirs* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1993), 250-75; Lt. Gen. Jahan Dad Khan, *Pakistan Leadership Challenges* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 1999), 121; Arif, 135-36.

26 *HRC Report*, Part IV, Chapters IV, V, and XI; Pakistan Navy Historical Section, *Story of the Pakistan Navy* (Islamabad, 1991), 320; Mansoor Shah, *The Gold Bird: Pakistan and Its Air Force -- Observations of a Pilot* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 242.

27 Maj. Gen. Rao Farman Ali Khan, *How Pakistan Got Divided* (Lahore: Jang, 1992), 119-20. Brig. Siddiqi remarked that "back in Rawalpindi none appeared to be in command," adding that there was an atmosphere of "forced optimism" at headquarters (Siddiqi, "1971 Curtain-Raiser").

28 Quote from Maj. Gen. Lachhman Singh Lehl, *Victory in Bangladesh* (Dehra Dun: Natraj, 1991), 55, also 64-65, 289, 298. Similar comments are in Air Marshal C. V. Gole, "Air Operations in the Western Sector During 1971 Indo-Pak War," *The Journal of the United Services Institution of India*, July-September 1990; also Lt. Gen. E. A. Vas, *Fools and Infantrymen: One View of History (1923-1993)* (Meerut: Kartikeya, 1995), 224. For an incisively critical view, see Lt. Gen. V. R. Raghavan's commentary in *The Telegraph*, 28 November 2000. More favorable analyses are in Gen. K. V. Krishna Rao, *Prepare or Perish* (New Delhi: Lancer, 1991), 249; Lal, 323-39; Admiral J. G. Nadkarni, "When the Gods Smiled on India," 4 December 2002, >[www.rediff.com/news](http://www.rediff.com/news)<; Maj. Gen. Rajendra Nath, *Military Leadership in India* (New Delhi: Lancer, 1990), 475; Maj. Gen. Joginder Singh, *Behind the Scene* (New Delhi: Lancer: 1993), 247.

29 Shaukat Riza, 133.

30 Saadullah Khan, 110. Brig. Siddiqi in "1971 Curtain-Raiser" and "The War of Self-Attrition." See also the eminently readable and insightful account by the then-commander of 26 Frontier Force in the northwestern sector: Maj. Gen. Hakeem Arshad Qureshi, *The 1971 Indo-Pak War: A Soldier's Narrative* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2002), 17-21, 76, 101: "Not a day passed when a firefight or an explosion did not take place."

31 Qureshi, 25, 35-36, 43-45.

32 When initially established, Eastern Command had been designated III Corps: Lt. Gen. Kamal Matinuddin, *Tragedy of Errors* (Lahore: Wajidalis, 1994), 337.

33 Niazi makes much of his alleged success at "foxing" Indian intelligence through the creation of these ad hoc formations (Niazi, 83-93). Indian Air Chief Marshal Lal says that India "did not know at that time" that some of the formations in East Pakistan "were virtually number-plate formations" (Lal, 224).

34 Matinuddin, 415; Farman Ali Khan, 105.

35 Maj. Gen. Rahim Khan, commander of 39 Division in 1971, interview in *The Herald*, September 2000. Good analysis also in Qureshi, 124-29.

36 Lt. Gen. Ali Kuli Khan, interview in *Defence Journal*, December 2001.

37 Quote from Matinuddin, 342-43, 347-50. General Matinuddin's study provides the most comprehensive and

trenchant commentary from the Pakistani perspective. Other sources for this section on plans: Niazi, 65-84, 107-113, 127; Shaukat Riza, 121-22; Farman Ali Khan, 104, 112-15; Fazal Muqem Khan, 108-110; HRC Report, Part IV, Chapter III; Siddiqi, "1971 Curtain-Raiser." Niazi defended his plans in his book and in an interview published in *The Herald*, September 2000.

38 Lehl, *Victory in Bangladesh*, 61.

39 The start date for the all-out Indian offensive is variously given as 4 and 6 December. Manekshaw has recently stated that he told Mrs. Gandhi 4 December in April because it was his "lucky number" ("Manekshaw Retreads Thin Red Line Between Field Marshal, Dismissal," *Indian Express*, 10 May 1999; and "Indira Feared Coup from Sam," *Tribune*, 2 August 1999). The sources who spoke to Sisson and Rose said that the start date was 6 December (Sisson and Rose, 213-14).

40 Jacob, 55-77; Lt. Col. Daljit Singh, "Battle of Dhaka," *Indian Defence Review*, July-September 1995.

41 Sukhwant Singh, *Liberation*, 89.

42 One squadron of MiG-21s was transferred to the west on 5 December (Prasad, 596-97).

43 The respective commanders were: Maj. Ziaur Rahman, Maj. Khaled Musharraf, and Maj. Safiullah. See <http://bangladeshonline.com//liberationwar> for maps of the sectors and additional details.

44 Some Indian officers of Bengali descent may have served as junior leaders in some of the Mukti Bahini units (communication from Dr. Stephen P. Cohen, Brookings Institution, December 2002).

45 The following are the principal Indian sources used for the war in the east: Jacob; Lehl, *Victory in Bangladesh*; Prasad; Maj. K. C. Praval, *Indian Army After Independence* (New Delhi: Lancer, 1990); Maj. Gen. Gurcharn Singh Sandhu, *The Indian Armour* (New Delhi: Vision, 1987); Sukhwant Singh, *Liberation*. Key Pakistani sources are: Fazal Muqem Khan, *HRC Report*, Matinuddin, Niazi, Salik, and Shaukat Riza.

46 Ten of the squadron's 12 tanks were captured or destroyed. In addition to the basic sources, see, Col. Anil Shorey, "The Unique Battle of Garibpur," *Sainik Samachar*, 16-30 April 2002. Not all of the Indian probes prospered: Pakistani Lt. Gen. Imtiaz Waraich, for example, narrates a successful defense by his battalion, 21 Punjab, in "Remembering Our Warriors," *Defence Journal*, October 2001.

47 The *HRC Report* is very critical of the brigade commander and refers to the retreat to Khulna as "a complete rout" (*HRC Report*, part III, Chapter VIII).

48 Lt. Col. Muhammad Mehboob Qadir, "Echoes from the Event Horizon," *Pakistan Army Journal*, March 1991.

49 Brig. Muhammad Hayat, "The Battle of Khulna," *Defence Journal*, March 1998. One Pakistani officer captured at Khulna characterized the war as "the gigantic but futile effort to save by force of arms what should have been preserved through vision, justice, and political sagacity twenty years ago," Brig. Muhammad Mehboob Qadir, "Of Good Order and Military Discipline," *Defence Journal*, October 2002.

50 Vice Admiral Mihir K. Roy, *War in the Indian Ocean* (New Delhi: Lancer, 1995).

51 Maj. K. C. Praval, *India's Paratroopers* (New Delhi: Thomson, 1974), 289-91; Maj. Gen. Afsir Karim, *The Story of the Indian Airborne Troops* (New Delhi: Lancer, 1993), 188-91.

52 Maj. Agha Humayun Amin, "Tank Ambush at Kushtia," *Defence Journal*, November 2000.

53 Maj. K. C. Praval, *The Red Eagles: A History of the Fourth Division of India* (New Delhi: Vision, 1982), 354-410. The commander of 62 Brigade is scathing in his assessment of his division and corps commanders at this point: Nath, 494-99.

54 A sketchy account of operations in 9 Sector from a Mukti Bahini fighter is Arif Husan and Akku Chowdhury, "The Fall of Satkhira and Khulna," *The Star*, 29 March 2002.

- 55 Maj. Gen. Lachhman Singh Lehl, *Indian Sword Strikes in East Pakistan* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1979); Lt. Gen. Pran Nath Kathpalia, *Mission with a Difference* (New Delhi: Lancer, 1986); Lt. Col. Daljit Singh, "Battle of Bhurungamri," *Indian Defence Review*, October 1993; Lt. Col. Daljit Singh, "Battle of Pachagarh," *Indian Defence Review*, April 1994. The commander of Pakistan 23 Brigade, Brig. Ansari, was relieved for the performance of his brigade during late November, especially the loss of Thakurgaon.
- 56 Brig. Julian Peter, "Hilli--Relived After Two Decades," *Pakistan Army Journal*, June 1991; Lt. Col. Asif Haroon, "My Memories of War: Battle of Hilli," *Pakistan Army Journal*, December 1981; Maj. Gen. Tajammal Hussain Malik, *The Story of My Struggle* (Lahore: Jang, 1991), 83-136.
- 57 Sukhwant Singh, *Liberation*, 178-82; Lt. Col. Daljit Singh, "Battle of Bogra," *Indian Defence Review*, October-December 1994 and January-March 1995.
- 58 One Pakistani major characterized his men's attitude as fighting a "desperate battle despite knowing in their hearts that the end result was a foregone conclusion" (Brig. Jaffer Khan as related by Maj. Ikhrum Seghal, editorial, *Defence Journal*, March 1998).
- 59 31 Baloch lost 233 men in its breakout from Jamalpur alone, Brig. Sultan Ahmed, "Jamalpur & Kargil," Pakistan Defence News Network, >[www.pakdefencenews.org](http://www.pakdefencenews.org)<.
- 60 Pakistani 93 Brigade was ordered to withdraw to the south to "rest and refit;" the brigade commander was captured on 13 December.
- 61 The Indian infiltration began on the night of 1/2 December. See Maj. Gen. Ashok Kalyan Verma's vivid and thoughtful account in *Rivers of Silence* (New Delhi: Lancer, 1998), 87-178.
- 62 Lt. Gen. Sagat Singh's notes cited in Cdr. Suresh D. Sinha, *Sailing and Soldiering in Defence of India* (New Delhi: Chanakya, 1990), 167.
- 63 The destruction of the rail bridge actually did little to slow the Indian advance as IV Corps did not have adequate material to lay decking for vehicular traffic. For this and other details of engineering support to IV Corps as well as vivid scenes from the drive to the Meghna, see Brig. Jagdev Singh, *The Dismemberment of Pakistan* (New Delhi: Lancer, 1988), 147-66.
- 64 Farman Ali Khan, 136, 138. The detailed story of 27 Brigade's actions is told from the Pakistani perspective by the brigade commander, Brig. Saadullah, in *East Pakistan to Bangladesh*.
- 65 The division headquarters was destroyed by an Indian air attack as it tried to flee from Chandpur to Narayanganj across the Meghna on 9 December. The division commander was wounded but recovered sufficiently to catch one of the last flights out of Dacca on the morning of 16 December. A new headquarters was established at Narayanganj under Brig. Mian Mansoor Mohammad to consolidate defenses southeast of Dacca (*HRC Report Supplement*, Part III, Chapter VIII).
- 66 Brig. H. S. Sodhi, "Operation Windfall": *Emergence of Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Allied, 1980), 280.
- 67 Salik, 200-208; Gul Hassan Khan, 326-29. There were virtually no regular Pakistani combat units in Dacca at this time.
- 68 Karim, 187, 194-201.
- 69 5 Mountain Brigade, also assigned to 101 Communications Zone, was held inside India.
- 70 General Jacob gives a detailed account of the surrender proceedings; see Jacob, 134-48.
- 71 Col. Iqbal M. Shafi, letter to the editor, *Defence Journal*, February 1999.
- 72 Shah, *Defence Journal*, January 1999.



73 On Dhalai, see Lt. Col. Daljit Singh, "Battle of Dhalai," *Indian Defence Review*, April 1993, for an Indian viewpoint; and Col. Mukhtar, "Dhullai Operations," *Defence Journal*, December 1998 for the Pakistani side.

74 The division commander requested permission to pull 313 Brigade back to Ashuganj, but his request was rejected by Niazi (*HRC Report Supplement*, Part III, Chapter VIII). An Indian historian places the blame for this decision on Rana, stating that the brigadier "persisted in his plans to withdraw to Sylhet" despite instructions from 14 Division to fall back towards Ashuganj (Lehl, *Victory in Bangladesh*, 184-85). According to the commander of 8 Indian Division, however, the Pakistani brigadiers told him that they believed the way south to be blocked by Indian troops (Gen. K. V. Krishna Rao, *In the Service of the Nation* (New Delhi: Viking, 2001, 114).

75 Curiously, Niazi sent Brig. Ashgar Hassan to relieve Brig. Iftikhar Rana as commander of 313 Brigade. Rana, however, stayed on with his brigade, while Hassan, as the senior brigadier, more or less assumed command of both brigades in the Sylhet area: 313 and 202 (Brig. M. Saleemullah).

76 General Aurora commented in a 1974 interview that "we did not give Chittagong a high priority in our operations" (originally published in the *Illustrated Weekly of India*, reprinted in *Defence Journal*, December 1978).

77 General Matinuddin refers to them as "LOB": "left out of the battle" (Matinuddin, 415).

78 Maj. Gen. S. S. Uban, *Phantoms of Chittagong* (New Delhi: Allied, 1985).

79 Prasad, 649-52. See also the very thorough analysis in Vice Admiral G. M. Hiranandani, *Transition to Triumph: Indian Navy 1965-1975* (New Delhi: Lancer, 2000), 170-82.

80 To augment its limited aviation assets, the Pakistan Army commandeered aircraft from flying clubs and other civilian associations, gave them a hasty coat of desert camouflage paint, and stenciled them with military markings. John Fricker, "The Tree-top Warriors," *Air Enthusiast*, October 1972, published on the web by the Pakistan Military Consortium at >www.pakdef.info<.

81 Fazal Muqeem Khan, 112.

82 *HRC Report*, Part IV, Chapter III; Fazal Muqeem Khan, 112-14.

83 *The Story of the Pakistan Air Force* (Islamabad: Shaheen Foundation, 1988), 446-48. The number of squadrons supposedly kept in reserve is from Fazal Muqeem Khan, 244.

84 Fazal Muqeem Khan, 113.

85 For a review of the Indian Navy's decision to acquire these boats from the USSR, see Vice Admiral N. Krishnan, *No Way But Surrender* (New Delhi: Vikas, 1980), 1-5.

86 Prasad, 279-80.

87 *Ibid.*, 298.

88 Maj. Gen. Sukhwant Singh, *Defence of the Western Border* (New Delhi: Lancer, 1998), 12.

89 Lal (269) remarks sardonically that "Intelligence threw its net wide and found 7 Division just about everywhere." Candeth and others express similar frustrations.

90 Lal, 174; Prasad, 420.

91 Prasad, 466-68; interview with the Chief of the Navy Staff, Admiral S. M. Nanda, in Sinha, 226-31.

92 The principal Indian sources used for the war in the west are: Lt. Gen. K. P. Candeth, *The Western Front* (New Delhi, 1984); Prasad; Praval, *Indian Army*; Sandhu; Maj. Gen. Jagjit Singh, *Indian Gunners at War: The Western Front--1971* (New Delhi: Lancer, 1994); Sukhwant Singh, *Western Border*. Key Pakistani sources are: Fazal Muqeem Khan, *HRC Report*, and

Shaukat Riza.

93 Sukhwant Singh, *Western Border*, 23.

94 *HRC Report*, Part IV, Chapter VIII.

95 Sukhwant Singh, *Western Border*, 26.

96 Candeth, 46; Prasad, 301-304.

97 Sukhwant Singh, *Western Border*, 28.

98 *Ibid.*, 29.

99 Owing to the lack of troops, only one regular company (C/2 Frontier Force) was available in the Tangdhar area at the start of the conflict and some portions of the Lipa valley were defended by ad hoc collections of regulars, paramilitary men and local levies. Maj. Gen. Fazal Muqem Khan, *History of the 2nd Battalion (Guides) Frontier Force Regiment* (Rawalpindi: The Army Press, 1996), 123-26.

100 Col. R. D. Palsokar, *History of the Sikh Light Infantry* (Fategarh: The Sikh Light Infantry, 1997), 304-309. The commander of 8 Sikh was relieved of command as a result of this action (Maj. Gen. Jagjit Singh, *With Honour and Glory* (New Delhi: Lancer, 2001), 79); and some Indian authors are quite critical of the entire enterprise: Sukhwant Singh, *Western Border*, 41-44; Col. M. N. Gulati, *Pakistan's Downfall in Kashmir* (New Delhi: Manas, 2001), 261-62.

101 Brig. Asif Haroon, *Kashmir Battles of 1948-1965-1971 and Ongoing Freedom Struggle* (Lahore: Takhleeqat, 1995), 155-59. Pakistan's 12 Division reportedly held an exercise in September/October to prepare for the assault on Punch: Gulati, 264.

102 R. D. Palsokar, *The Grenadiers: A Tradition of Valour* (Jabalpur: Grenadiers Regimental Centre, 1980), 415-18.

103 23 Division's artillery practiced some innovative deception techniques such as deploying guns well forward of doctrinal norms to avoid counterbattery fire and using a few heavy guns from the Artillery School to simulate the presence of corps artillery support. From an interview with the divisional artillery commander (and 111 Brigade commander from 5 December), Maj. Gen. Naseerullah Khan Babar, *Defence Journal*, April 2001.

104 Jagjit Singh, *Indian Gunners*, 75-90.

105 According to the *HRC Report* (Part IV, Chapter VIII), 23 Division had accomplished its mission by gaining the line of the river. The division commander, however, decided to press across after reforming his troops.

106 Additional sources on the fight for Chhamb include: Brig. Safdar Ali, "Chhamb--A Battle Won Twice," *Pakistan Army Journal*, September 1992; Maj. Agha Humayun Amin, "The Battle of Chhamb 1971," *Defence Journal*, September 1999; Brig. Shamin Yasin Manto, "Remembering Our Warriors" (interview), *Defence Journal*, February 2002; Lt. Col. Ahmad Saeed, *The Battle of Chhamb* (1971) (Rawalpindi: Army Education Press, 1973); Lt. Gen. R. K. Jasbir Singh, "Battle of Chhamb: Indo-Pak War 1971," *Journal of the United Services Institution of India*, July-September 1990; Maj. Gen. Prem K. Khanna and Pushpinder Singh Chopra, *Portrait of Courage: Century of the 5th Battalion, The Sikh Regiment* (New Delhi: Military Studies Convention, 2001), 193-232. Manto avers that the division's attempts to cross the Manawar Tawi were undertaken without sufficient preparation: "the effort to achieve *speed* actually turned into *haste*" (emphasis in original).

107 Quoted in "Defending the West," from *1971 India-Pakistan War: Remembering a Liberation War*, >[www.bharat-rakshak.com](http://www.bharat-rakshak.com)<. See also Jagjit Singh, *Honour and Glory*, 84.

108 For example, Brig. Harinder Singh Sodhi, *Top Brass: A Critical Appraisal of the Indian Military Leadership* (Noida: Trishul, 1993). Sodhi calls the advance "pathetic," averring that it demonstrated "pedestrian thinking" (130, 147). Likewise, Jagjit Singh, *Honour and Glory*, 92-93, 104; Maj. Gen. Kuldip Singh Bajwa, *The Falcon in My Name: A Soldier's Diary* (New Delhi: South Asia Publications, 2000), 200-14; Lal, 237-40; Sukhwant Singh, *Western Border*, 106-09; Lt. Col.

J. R. Saigal, *Pakistan Splits: The Birth of Bangladesh* (New Delhi: Manas, 2000), 155-68.

109 Sources for the Changez Force: Lt. Col. Asif Duraiz Akhtar, "My Memories of War: The Battle of Tola," *Pakistan Army Journal*, June 1988; Col. M. Y. Effendi, "Smouldering Embers of Ten December Days," *Pakistan Army Journal*, Winter 1994; Brig. Nasir Ahmed Khan, "Covering Troops Battle," *Pakistan Army Journal*, September 1984. Some Indian participants aver that the Pakistani minefields were much overrated by the Indians and should have been crossed with greater expedition: Bajwa, 206, 212; Saigal, 65-76.

110 Maj. Agha Humayun Amin, "Battle of Barapind-Jarpal 16 Dec 1971," *Defence Journal*, October 1999; *HRC Report*, Part IV, Chapter VIII; Lt. Gen. Hanut Singh, "*Fakhr-e-Hind: The Story of the Poona Horse* (Dehra Dun: Agrim, 1993), 259-90; also Anil Bhat, "Taken by the Gathering Storm," *Sainik Samachar*, 16-28 February 1997. The other regiment of 8 Armored Brigade, 27 Cavalry, played only a limited role in the fighting. The engagement is variously known as the "Battle of Barapind-Jarpal" and the "Battle of Basantar."

111 Fazal Muqem Khan, 215-16.

112 Many Indian writers (notably Sukhwant Singh, H. S. Sodhi, and K. C. Praval) are very critical of the performance of Indian I Corps in the Shakargarh fighting. Colonel Ranjit Sengupta, on the other hand, points out that the corps did succeed in protecting a vulnerable segment of India's border with Pakistan ("Battlefield Management and Logistics: Shakargarh 1971," *Indian Defence Review*, April 1994).

113 Some Pakistani commentators, such as then Brigadier Naseerullah Khan Babar, are acidly critical of the performance of Pakistani I Corps leadership during the war, particularly for what is seen as an overly defensive mindset. Babar states that the 23 Division offensive was supposed to include all of 17 Division, but that the latter was largely removed from the operation (66 Brigade and artillery excepted) after the I Corps commander expressed worries about his defensive mission (Babar, *Defence Journal*, April 2001). Also Col. S. G. Mehdi, "Our Lost Defence Cause: The Tragedy of 1971 and Its Forerunner," *Pakistan Army Journal*, December 1977.

114 For two views of one of these engagements, see Lt. Col. Ghulam Qadir, "The Maqboolpur Enclave Encounter," *Pakistan Army Journal*, September 1982; and "Attack on Pak Fatehpur Post (8 Sikh LI)," *Sainik Samachar*, 26 May 1991.

115 *HRC Report*, Part IV, Chapter VIII.

116 Prasad, 370.

117 Major General Ghulam Umar, then Secretary of the National Security Council, has since disparaged this plan: "We always chanted that the defense of the East lies in the West. It was a bogus theory." Quoted in Muntassir Mamoon, *The Vanquished Generals*, 92.

118 Mansoor Shah, 256.

119 Jahan Dad Khan, 124.

120 The bulk of this narrative and the quote from the Army orders are taken from *HRC Report*, Part IV, Chapter VIII. Lt. Gen. Candeth, commander of India's Western Command, opines that a Pakistani attack between Jammu and Gurdaspur (see West Map F) during October would have stood a good chance of success as Indian I Corps was not in position there until late in the month (Candeth, 21, 28). A recent Pakistani commentator suggests that the time to attack was late November after the Indian incursions into East Pakistan that resulted in the engagements around Garibpur and other locales: Lt. Col. Mukhtar Ahmad Gilani, "Lost Opportunity -- A Military Analysis 1971," *Defence Journal*, January 2003.

121 Among others, see Gul Hassan Khan, 329-39; Jahan Dad Khan, 121; *Pakistan Air Force*, 467-74; Gilani, "Lost Opportunity" (citing interviews with Gul Hassan Khan); Maj. Agha Humayun Amin, "The Anatomy of Indo-Pak Wars: A Strategic and Operational Analysis," *Defence Journal*, August 2001; Maj. Agha Humayun Amin, "The Western Theatre in 1971: A Strategic and Operational Analysis," *Defence Journal*, February 2002; Siddiqi, "The War of Self-Attrition;" Brig. A. R. Siddiqi, "National Defence and Security: A Reappraisal," *The Nation*, 8 January 1990.

122 Maj. Gen. Aboobaker Osman Mitha, *Fallacies & Realities: An Analysis of Lt. Gen. Gul Hassan's "Memoirs"* (Lahore:

Maktaba Fikr-o-Danish, 1994), 66-67.

123 Maj. J. N. Goel, "Defending Ganganagar," *Sainik Samachar*, 20 July 1986; also published as Lt. Col. J. N. Goel, "51 (I) Para Brigade Operations 1971," in Karim, 375-79.

124 There is disagreement over who ordered the attack on Jaisalmer. Gul Hassan Khan and other Pakistani writers state that the operation was a favorite project of the Chief of the Army Staff, General Abdul Hamid Khan, and that the attack was arranged at the last minute despite the strenuous objections of 18 Division's commander, Maj. Gen. B. M. Mustafa. Furthermore, they claim that the PAF was not apprised of the scheme. Brig. Z. A. Khan (commander of 38 Cavalry at the time), however, claims that the push to Jaisalmer was planned in October and that the Chief of the Air Staff knew of the plan weeks before the war, at least in outline form. See his autobiography *The Way It Was* (Karachi: Ahbab, 1998); and an interview "Remembering Our Warriors: Brig. (Retd) Zahir Alam Khan," *Defence Journal*, April 2002. Z. A. Khan also writes that the plan to take Jaisalmer was abandoned just prior to the attack. Another veteran, however, questions many of the details in Z. A. Khan's accounts: Lt. Col. H. K. Afridi, letter to the editor, *Defence Journal*, February 1999. Similarly, Mansoor Shah makes a convincing case that general contingency plans to support the Army in Sindh/Rajasthan did exist, but that the Army did not call on the PAF until the disaster at Longewala was in progress (257-63).

125 The defeat of the Pakistani attack on Longewala has drawn the attention of numerous Indian writers. In addition to the standard war histories, see Air Marshal M. S. Bawa, "Saga of Longewala," *Indian Air Force Journal*, 1997, available at >[www.bharat-rakshak.com/IAF/History](http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/IAF/History)<; Brig. V. P. Dev, "The Desert War -- 1971," *Indian Defence Review*, January 1994; James Hattar, "Taking on the Enemy at Longewala," *The Tribune*, 16 December 2000; Virendra Verma Padma Shri, *Hunting Hunters: Battle of Longewala December 1971* (Dehra Dun: Youth Education Publications, 1992); Lt. Col. Jai Singh, *Tanot Longewala and Other Battles of the Rajasthan Desert 1965 & 1971* (Dehra Dun: Palit & Palit, 1973); Wg. Cdr. Kukke Suresh, "Battle of Longewala," >[www.bharat-rakshak.com/IAF/History](http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/IAF/History)<. In addition to these sources, see Sukhwant Singh, *Western Border*, 222, for Pakistani equipment losses.

126 Fazal Muqem Khan, 212. Among other things, 12 Division cited inadequate artillery and armor support (Jagjit Singh, *Honour and Glory*, 118-19).

127 The inclusion of the divisional artillery is from V. Longer, *Red Coats to Olive Green* (Bombay: Allied, 1974), 497.

128 Palsokar, *The Grenadiers*, 420-21.

129 Mansoor Shah, 264-65, 284-85; *Pakistan Air Force*, 464; Prasad, 399-400; Sukhwant Singh, *Western Border*, 215-42

130 Sukhwant Singh, *Western Border*, 176-245, is very critical of Indian operations in Rajasthan. Maj. Agha Humayun Amin, "Remembering Our Warriors: Brig. Muhammad Taj," *Defence Journal*, September 2002.

131 The BSF advances began on 13 December. Some limited information is in "Kutch during the 1971 Indo-Pak War," >[www.kutchinfo.com](http://www.kutchinfo.com)<.

132 This section draws principally on Pushpinder Singh, Ravi Rikhye, and Peter Steinemann, *Fiza'ya* (New Delhi: Aerospace Studies, 1991) [hereafter *Fiza'ya*], supplemented by *The Story of the Pakistan Air Force*, the *HRC Report*, Lal, and Prasad.

133 "Air War in the East," *Strategic Affairs*, 1 January 2001.

134 Sher Khan, "Last Flight," *Defence Journal*, February 2001.

135 Former PAF officer Mansoor Shah makes the argument about the "provocative strikes" in *The Gold Bird*, 226-32.

136 *Fiza'ya*, 58-60; the PAF official history, on the other hand, paints a most favorable picture of its opening actions, *Pakistan Air Force*, 448-51. For lively first-person account of B-57 operations by a PAF officer, see Air Commodore Rais A. Rafi, *PAF Bomber Operations 1965 & 1971 Wars* (PAF Book Club, n.d.), 97-135. Mansoor Shah provides an insightful analysis of the evolution of contending air strategies during the war (227, 242, 247).

- 137 For a sample of detailed air histories, see "When Lightning Strikes: No. 20 Squadron at War," *Vayu Aerospace Journal*, II/1999; Wing Commander Salim Baig, "Air Battles December 1971 -- My Experience," *Defence Journal*, September 2000; and selected Indian squadron histories at >www.bharat-rakshak.com<.
- 138 See the history of No. 35 Squadron at >www.bharat-rakhsak.com/IAF/History. Lal (294-98) details the weak Air Force-Navy coordination. The credit for setting the oil storage tanks alight remains disputed; probably both services can justly claim some portion of the achievement. See Hiranandani, *Triumph*, 199; and Admiral J. G. Nadkarni, "Rewriting History," Rediff on the Net, 23 December 2000, >www.rediff.com<.
- 139 The Navy emerged from the war with considerable bitterness toward their Air Force compatriots: *Pakistan Navy*, 366. The Air Force's official history offers a different view: *Pakistan Air Force*, 464-66.
- 140 Lal describes the bombing missions of India's No. 44 Squadron in great detail, 234-36, 298-305.
- 141 *Fiza'ya*, 61. See also American reports on this issue in Sajit Gandhi, ed., "The Tilt: The U.S. and the South Asian Crisis of 1971," National Security Archive Electronic Briefing Book No. 79, 16 December 2002, at >www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB79/index2/htm<.
- 142 Mansoor Shah, 285.
- 143 *HRC Report*, Part IV, Chapter VIII; Sajit Gandhi.
- 144 Vice Admiral Gulab Hiranandani, "The Indian End of the Telescope," *Naval War College Review*, Spring 2002.
- 145 Prasad, 210-11. The Indians trained some 550 Bengalis as frogmen. By the end of November, they had sunk an estimated 50,000 tons of shipping and damaged an additional 65,000 tons.
- 146 Vikrant was operating at a reduced speed of approximately 16 knots owing to a crack in one of its boilers. Note that the Indian Navy, concerned for the security of the Vikrant, had surreptitiously moved her to a holding harbor in the Andaman and Nicobar islands on 13 November while initiating elaborate deception measures to disguise the move (see map).
- 147 Fazal Muqem Khan, 153; Matinuddin, *Tragedy*, 439; Rear Admiral Mian Zahir Shah, "The Great Escape," *Dawn*, 20 November 2001.
- 148 Another possibility is an accidental explosion caused by a battery leak. Hiranandani provides a comprehensive survey of reports on the loss of the Ghazi in *Transition to Triumph*, 140-53. Prasad (625-28) is also a very thorough from the Indian viewpoint. The Pakistani view is in *Pakistan Navy*, 336-40. See also B. Harry, "The Sinking of the Ghazi," *Bharat Rakshak Monitor*, September-October 2001.
- 149 Padma and Palash were ad hoc combatants from the Calcutta Port Trust outfitted with two 40mm antiaircraft guns each. The combatants were accompanied by MV Chitragada, a BSF vessel; she remained at Mongla while the other three proceeded up the river on 10 December. Hiranandani, *Triumph*, 154-57; Islam, 304; Prasad, 642-45; "Force Alpha," *Sainik Samachar*, 16-31 January 1997.
- 150 In addition to standard naval histories, see B. Harry, "Trident, Grandslam and Python: Attacks on Karachi," *Bharat Rakshak Monitor*, January-February 2002; Capt. T. K. Suresh, "Battle of Karachi," *Sainik Samachar*, 16-31 January 1997; and "Sinking of Khukri," >www.paknavy.gov.pk/HISTORY<. The lack of coordination is discussed in Lal, 294-98. For the psychological impact on the Pakistan Navy, *Pakistan Navy*, 355.
- 151 *Pakistan Air Force*, 466; Gp. Capt. S. M. Hali, "F-104 Starfighters in Pakistan Air Force," *Defence Journal*, May 2000; Hiranandani, *Triumph*, 212-13.
- 152 This brief summary of this controversial incident is drawn largely from Sisson and Rose (262-65), and from Admiral Hiranandani's excellent summary of the existing commentary (*Triumph*, 157-70). Kissinger recounts his view in detail in *The White House Years* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1979), 842-918. Christopher Van Hollen offers a trenchant

criticism of White House policy in "The Tilt Policy Revisited: Nixon-Kissinger Geopolitics and South Asia," *Asian Survey*, April 1980. See also the comprehensive and insightful comments in Dennis Kux, *India and the United States: Estranged Democracies* (Washington DC: National Defense University Press, 1992), 305-07.

153 Kissinger, 897; Kux, 306; Sisson and Rose, 263; Jackson, 136-42; Garver, 210-15; William Burr, ed., *The Kissinger Transcripts* (New York: The New Press, 1998), 48-59; Dennis Kux, *The United States and Pakistan 1947-2000: Disenchanted Allies* (Washington DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2001), 184-206. The U.S. view during 1971 received a renewed airing with the opening of some British archives in December 2002: see "India Wanted to Disintegrate Entire Pakistan in '71," *The Nation*, 2 January 2003 and "India Planned to Break Pakistan in 1971: Secret Files," *Hindustan Times*, 2 January 2003 for reporting of this story in the South Asian press (albeit with misleading headlines).

154 Vice Admiral Krishnan, commanding the Navy's Eastern Command at the time, represents a prominent Indian analysis of the Enterprise incident when he concludes that the US naval task force was intended to facilitate the evacuation of a significant number of Pakistani troops by sea from Chittagong. He and other Indian writers cite Indian intelligence that pointed to Pakistani attempts to assemble several transports in Chittagong harbor during the final week of the war (Krishnan, 52-62). This is a reasonable conclusion, but there is no evidence to indicate that Nixon and Kissinger had anything so specific in mind when they dispatched Task Force 74 toward the Bay of Bengal. All the available evidence suggests that their entire purpose was to use the Enterprise and her consorts as nothing more than a powerful "show of force" in what they saw as a complex series of geopolitical maneuvers vis-à-vis China and the Soviet Union. On this aspect of the incident, see the many declassified U.S. documents assembled by Sanjit Gandhi for the National Security Archive.

155 C. Raja Mohan, "India, U.S. Bury the Ghosts of 1971," *The Hindu*, 7 December 2001. In an ironic coincidence, 1971 was the second time that the USS Enterprise had been dispatched toward the Bay of Bengal: in 1962, President Kennedy sent the ship as a show of support to India following the Chinese invasion.

156 Prasad, 687-89; Sukhwant Singh, *Western Border*, 386; *The Daily Excelsior*, 26 July 1999.

157 See >[www.bharat-rakshak.com/land-forces](http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/land-forces)<; and International Institute for Strategic Studies, *Strategic Survey* (London, IISS, 1972), 52.

158 First estimate from Fazal Muqem Khan, 280; second estimate of dead from Matinuddin, 430. Equipment losses from *HRC Report Supplement*, Part IV, Chapter VII, and author's estimates. Prisoners and internees from Prasad, 753.

159 The number of East and West Pakistanis casualties during the civil war has been a matter of great controversy, with estimates running from several hundred thousand to three million or more.

160 P. V. S. Jagan Mohan, "Indian Air Force Losses in the 1971 War," >[www.bharat-rakshak.com/IAF/History](http://www.bharat-rakshak.com/IAF/History)<; and Indranil Banerjee, Rupak Chattopadhyay, and Air Marshal C. V. Gole, "The Western Air Situation," from *1971 India-Pakistan War: Remembering a Liberation War*, >[www.bharat-rakshak.com](http://www.bharat-rakshak.com)<; also at >[www.subcontinent.com/1971war/](http://www.subcontinent.com/1971war/)<. Detailed figures in *Fiza'ya*, 64-67 are similar.

161 Prasad, 453-54, 614, 689. Also Gole, "Air Operations."

162 *HRC Report*, Annexure B to Part IV, Chapter VIII. *Pakistan Air Force*, 470-71. Brigadier General Chuck Yeager, the American defense representative in Pakistan during the war, states that the PAF lost 34 aircraft and the Indians 102 (quoted in *Pakistan Air Force*, 471).

163 In recent years, relations have been tarnished by disputes over cross-border migration and Indian allegations that Bangladesh harbors Pakistan-sponsored terrorists who conduct attacks in India.

164 Recent references in Pakistan include: "The Saddest Day," editorial in *The Nation*, 16 December 2002; and Syed Shahid, "What Has Made It a Year of Infamy," *Dawn*, 16 December 2002.

165 See Maj. Gen. Sukhwant Singh's thorough analysis in *General Trends*, (New Delhi: Vikas, 1982).

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