

Pakistan coveted the Himalayan kingdom, while Indian leaders including Gandhi and Nehru, hoped that the kingdom would join India. Hari Singh signed a Standstill Agreement (preserving status quo) with Pakistan, but still withheld his decision by August 15.

Tribal Attack and the First Kashmir War

Till August 15th, 1947 Kashmir did not accede to India. Sardar knew the importance of Kashmir from its geographical position and wanted to tackle the problem himself as the Minister of the States, but Nehru was willing to deal with Kashmir, and Sardar did not object to it. Pakistan, concerned about the lack of movement on the front, attempted to force the issue by permitting the incursions of tribals from the North-West Frontier, followed by regular forces. On October 22, 1947, about 5,000 tribesmen led by Pakistani Army regulars attacked the region and quickly captured large parts of it. Instead of exploiting their initial success, however, the tribesmen stopped to loot and plunder, which gave a breathing space to the Raja of Kashmir.

The question of sending the assistance of the Army of India to help the Maharaja rebuff an armed attack by the intruders was discussed at a meeting. Such assistance came on the condition of the Maharaja signing the Instrument of Accession, which he then did. In a panic, Maharaja Hari Singh signed the Instrument of Accession, becoming part of India, the same day. The raiders were just five kilometers from the capital, Srinagar. India decided to send an agent to Kashmir and Kunwar Sir Daleep Singh was posted as Agent in Jammu.

India offered military assistance to the Kashmiri Government, which lacked an organized military. Indian troops secured Jammu, Srinagar and the valley itself during the **First Kashmir War**, but the intense fighting flagged with the onset of winter, which made much of the state impassable.

Ceasefire and the UN involvement

Prime Minister Nehru, recognizing the degree of international attention brought to bear on the dispute, declared a ceasefire and sought U.N. arbitration with the promise of a plebiscite. Patel had argued against both, describing Kashmir as a bilateral dispute and its accession as justified by international law. Patel had feared that the U.N.'s involvement would stall the process and allow Pakistan to reinforce its presence in Kashmir. Additionally, the outcome of a plebiscite remained highly uncertain. At the instance of Mountbatten, the Kashmir dispute was referred to the United Nations on 1st January, 1948 of which Patel was skeptical. There, India accused Pakistan of sending both regular troops and tribesmen into J&K. This led to the establishment of the U.N. Commission in India and Pakistan (UNCIP) by the Security Council to assess the claims and counterclaims of the two countries. Although Pakistan initially denied any involvement, it later on admitted that its army had been involved in the aggression.

On August 13, 1948, the UNCIP passed a resolution asking Pakistan to withdraw its troops and tribesmen from J&K. "Once Pakistan withdraws them, the administration by the local authorities needs to be restored, India will reduce its troops to the barest minimum and then a plebiscite will be held to ascertain the wishes of the people of the state." The cease-fire went into effect on January 1, 1949, and the cease-fire line became the Line of Control (LOC), which later became de-facto border of India and Pakistan.

By taking the matter to the U.N., India internationalized the issue and made Pakistan a party in the issue. By signing the Instrument of Accession, however, Maharaja Hari Singh had made J&K part of India. This was completely legal under the Indian Independence Act of 1947, signed by both India and Pakistan, which gave sovereignty of the state to Maharaja Hari Singh after the lapse of British Paramountcy. The Act contained no provision for ascertaining the