MUN@UWCSEA XIII

CHAIR REPORT

Forum: Historical Joint Crisis Committee

Issue: Addressing and navigating the peaceful dissolution of the British Raj

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UWC SOUTH EAST ASIA

HJCC Procedural Guide

Introduction:

The dissolution, partition and independence of the British Raj/British India is truly an interesting topic for this historical joint crisis committee. Starting at the date of this conference, the 15th August 1947 at 12:00 am, at which the dominions of India and Pakistan have just been established, the crisis involves navigating the potential harmony, or conflict, between the newly independent states, the princely states around them, and their former colonial overlord, the United Kingdom/the British Empire. In our world, the resolution to this partition was not a favourable one for anyone, with over 1 million deaths caused in a mass migration of over 20 million people between the two partitioned states. Hence, in discussing this issue, delegates can try to find a solution to the rapid, potentially inadequate legislation in the Indian Independence Act of 1947 that was reached simply to allow a swift British withdrawal from the region.

Furthermore, it can evidently be argued that many modern day disputes and conflicts have emerged between the two, or now three, states, of India, Pakistan and Bangladesh (at the time of the crisis called East Pakistan). However, delegates are not to, in any way shape or form, discuss events that happened after the date of this conflict, the 15th of August 1947, unless they are brought up by the chairs in crisis updates. Additionally, as there are links between modern day conflict in the region, and the crisis at hand in 1947, delegates are asked to proceed with respect and consideration, whilst of course remaining passionate in finding creative solutions to the issue at hand.

Definition of Key Terms:

1. **British Raj:** The period of direct British rule over the Indian subcontinent from 1858 to 1947, following the Indian Rebellion of 1857 and the abolition of the East India Company's role in governing the region. It was instituted by the Government of India Act of 1858.
2. **Indian Independence Act 1947:** An Act of the UK Parliament passed on July 18, 1947, that partitioned British India into two independent dominions, India and Pakistan. It ended British suzerainty, abolished the title "Emperor of India," and provided for the division of assets, including the armed forces.
3. **Two-nation theory:** According to this theory Muslims and Hindus are two separate nations by definition; Muslims have their own customs, religion, and

tradition, and from social and moral points of view, Muslims are different from Hindus; and therefore, Muslims should be able to have their own separate homeland in which Islam is the dominant religion, being segregated from Hindus.

4. **Pakistan:** the proposed name for the Islamic nation that was to be separated from India as an individual nation.
5. **India:** As of now India refers to all princely nations as well as British-controlled areas in the Indian subcontinent.
6. **Viceroy of India:** The title held by the Governor-General of India from 1858 to 1947, representing the British monarch as head of the colonial administration. The last and current viceroy is Lord Mountbatten.

Background Information:

The East Indian Company

Trade with India had always been highly valued by many European nations in ancient times; however, the long route between posed many challenges and obstacles making trade expensive, unsafe, and undependable. Therefore, many European nations began exploring maritime routes, which required the setting up of fortified ports. Hence, in the 16th century, Britain set up the East Indian Company to set up ports, fortify its holdings, and conduct trade.

Initially, the company conducted trade with mutually beneficial relationships; however, their territorial paramountcy began in 1757; where they overthrew the Nawab of Bengal in the Battle of Plassey. This resulted in the Company's control over Bengal; which was effectively secured in 1770 when Warren Hastings brought the nawab's administrative offices to Calcutta under his oversight. About the same time, The British Parliament started to closely monitor the company through the passing of successive laws; hence indirectly granting them control over India. Their dominion only grew across the subcontinent in the following decades through a series of wars, treaties, and annexations; subjugating most of India to the determination of British Governors and Merchants.

The East Indian company successfully maintained this control until the 1857 Indian rebellion, where it was abolished. The company had assigned rifles to soldiers with cartileges greased with the lard of pigs and cows. As biting these cartilages contradicted the religious beliefs of the prominent muslim and hindu religions of India, this sparked outrage; which was articulated by the many years of mistreatment. Soldiers refused to use their cartileges, and some even shot their British officers. The Indian soldiers marched to Delhi, where they murdered many

British civilians, and took over while appointing the Mughal emperor Bahadur Shah II as their leader. The news of the Delhi uprising spread rapidly across the country, resulting in rebellions breaking out in other parts of India. To respond to the rebellions, the British government sent reinforcements from Britain, which ultimately led to the massacre of over 100,000 Indians. Delhi was recaptured, and the rebellion was crushed by 1858. Despite emerging victorious, the uprising made the British government realise that the East Indian Company could no longer safely run a country; resulting in the British crown taking direct control of India, and the start of British rule.

The British Rule

India was ruled by a Viceroy who represented the British crown, and answered back to the British Parliament. It was governed by a bureaucratic system designed to ensure that authority rested with Britain, containing mainly British officials, along with a small number of elite educated Indians. The raj was divided into 2 parts-British India, and Princely states. British India was directly controlled by Britain by the British officials and the viceroy. On the other hand, the Princely states were ruled by local monarchs under British supervision.

The country was turned into a colonial economy which served Britain's interests. India's fertile land and resources were all used to produce cotton, tea, and spices to export back to Britain; while Britain flooded the Indian market with textiles, machinery, and other manufactured products. This led to the decline of local traditional industries such as the textile, and the handicraft industry; leaving many individuals impoverished. Through high taxation on Impecunious people, and through forced commercial cropping; Indians were left more prone to famines and were left in poverty.

Finally, The British Rule brought changes to the country's social structure, and cultural identity. The British introduced western style curriculums through opening up universities in Calcutta, Mumbai, and Madras. English slowly became the primary method of instruction, which moved away from the traditional languages such as Hindi, Sanskrit, and Bengali. The British aimed to use this as a method of producing a small educated and elite population which could help assist the British Administration in their rule. This also resulted in the formation of a new social class of English educated Indians, who were distinguished by their knowledge of philosophy, science, and literature. The creation of this social class was also a catalyst of change, as the exposure to the political ideas of Britain caused these individuals to question British rule, and become leaders in future nationalist movements. Furthermore, Britain introduced the Divide and rule policy, which was a strategy to intentionally encourage separation amongst Indians. After the East

Indian Rebellion, they realised that a united Indian population was a threat; hence to avoid another uprising, they encouraged division between caste, religion, and region. They implemented this by introducing separate electorates for different religions, recruiting individuals from different regions into different army units, and through their media portraying how Muslims and Hindus have conflicted interests rather than shared goals.

The Rise of Indian nationalism

By the late 19th century, there was a growing frustration amongst Indians due to British rule. British officials often viewed Indians as inferior, and they were often excluded from administrative and high ranking government positions, no matter their qualifications. Public spaces also often featured segregation; where certain areas were marked "european only". After being familiarised with British promises of justice and progress, experiencing social and economical mistreatment sparked outrage and forced nationalism.

In 1885, to combat the discrimination and inequality, the India National Congress (INC) was formed. They strove for greater Indian representation in the government, and fairer economic policies; such as lower taxes on farmers, fairer trade policies which did not harm Indian Industries, and greater spending on Indian Welfare. Leaders such as Dadabhai Naoroji exposed how British rule worsened India's economic state, and impoverished them in his book "Poverty and un-British Rule in India". Furthermore, they fought against the racial discrimination; and strove to fight against the divide and rule policy. They encouraged Indians from different religious backgrounds to unite and fight against the British empire. Initially, they believed that the British empire could be persuaded into reform if Indians reasoned with them respectfully; however, progress was slow, and many of their requests were ignored.

The British response to the activism led to frustration, and eventually encouraged more assertive nationalist leaders, known as extremists. Leaders such as Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Bipin Chandra Pal, and Lala Lajpat Rai began advocating for self rule, rather than reform. Their irritation only grew when the partition of Bengal was introduced in 1905; where the viceroy announced that Bengal, the biggest province at the time, should be split into 2 parts: East Bengal and Assam, and western Bengal. The East Bengal side consisted of a Muslim population, while the western Bengal side consisted of a Hindu population. This was viewed as a method of further destroying the unity of India, and hence led to anti British movements. This was where the Swadashi movement began, where the INC encouraged Indians to boycott British schools, goods, and courts; while promoting Indian made products. By 1911, the partition was cancelled, and Bengal was reunited.

The Gandhian Era

After the first world war, India's political climate worsened. They had contributed resources and soldiers to the British empire; yet, in return, they received little political support. Repressive measures such as the Rowlatt act in 1919 enabled Indians to be arrested without trial. Hence, this started the Gandhian era, where Mahatma Gandhi emerged as a leader of mass nationalist movements. His first one being the Non-Cooperation Movement, which featured protests against the repressive laws, boycotts against British goods, and the encouragement of creating India's own schools, businesses and local institutions. Although initially successful, the movement ended in 1922 when protesters clashed with police; and 22 individuals were killed. In 1930, Gandhi resumed his nonviolent protests through his famous salt march, where he and a group of 78 other followers walked 240 miles to illegally acquire salt from seawater defying the British salt monopoly. Finally, Gandhi started the Quit India Movement, which was an attempt to immediately end British rule. During World War 2, Britain involved India in the war without consulting Indian leaders, causing outrage. Hence, the INC, led by Mahatma Gandhi and Nehru at the time, requested Britain to leave immediately. In August 1942, Gandhi released the Quit India Resolution Calling Britain to withdraw from India, and for Indians to resist colonial rule through non violent protests. There were nationwide strikes, boycotts, protests, and many refused to pay taxes. Following this movement, the British government arrested INC leaders without trial; and harsh measures were used to suppress protests such as censorship and police crackdowns. Although this did not immediately achieve independence, it mobilised millions, and depicted that India was capable of self rule. Gandhi's leadership caused Britain's repression to be criticized internationally; and after already being weakened economically and politically by the war, it made the transfer of power to be inevitable.

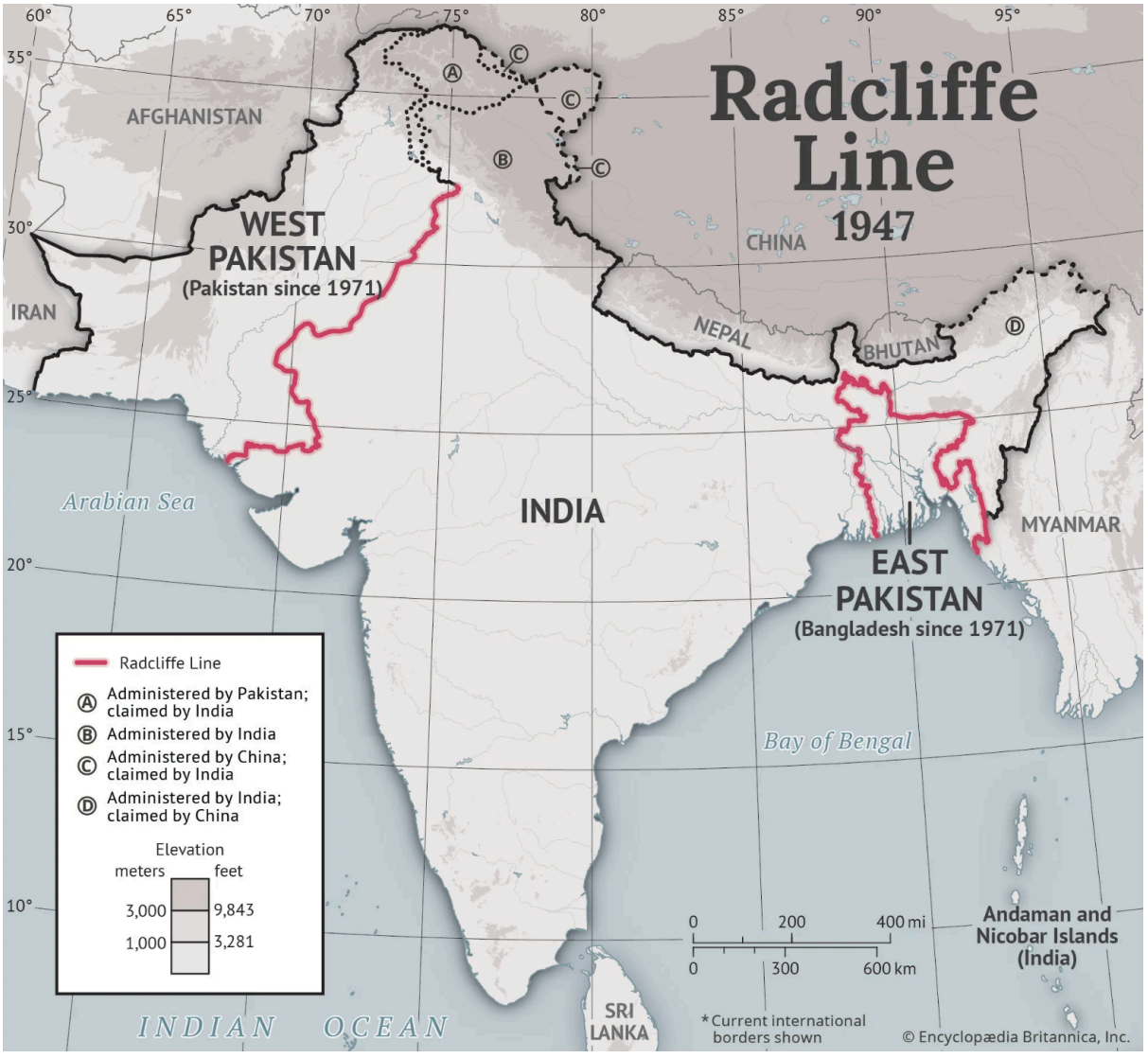
Current Situation:

The partition of British India

This conference occurs at 12:00 am on the 15th August 1947, the exact time in which the division of British India came into action, forming the two independent dominion states of the union of India, and the dominion of Pakistan. Agreements and debates around the partition had occurred prior to this date, with the chosen

plan, labelled the "Mountbatten Plan" or the "3 June Plan", being announced by Lord Mountbatten on the 3 June of the same year. The plan, as outlined by the last viceroy of British India in a press conference on that day, revealed the date and plans for the independence of British India. The main purpose of the plan was this separation of the sub-continent into two dominions, with the states being separated into India, East Pakistan (today Bangladesh) and West Pakistan, with the border being the Radcliffe line.

The Radcliffe line was decided per a British government commissioned report and was named after the London barrister chairmaning the report, Sir Cyril Radcliffe. The line aimed to separate the states mostly along religious barriers, with India formed in the majority Hindu areas of British India, and Pakistan into two non-contiguous areas from the majority muslim areas. This separation between the dominions can be seen in the photo below.



Note that the Radcliffe line, and hence the official borders between the two states, have not yet been announced to the leaders, states and people of the two newly established dominions.

It is also important to understand the rights and responsibilities afforded to the two dominions, and to the British empire, at the time of the partition. These rights were outlined in the Indian Independence Act, a legislation passed by the British Government on the 18th of July, 1947. The law declared each dominion to have full rights and sovereignty over its own states, and its interactions with other states. The dominion status was intended to, and was, only temporary until the nations established their own constitutions, which occurred a few years later for each state. Essentially, dominion status meant the full release of any British control or governance over/inside of India, and only left the British monarch as a symbolic head of state.

It is important to note that this act also considered the relinquishing of British suzerainty over the princely states of the region, a key one of contention being the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. The legislation allowed each of the approximately 565 princely states to choose between independence or accession to one of the two established states, India or Pakistan. However, Lord Mountbatten did advise the princely states to accede to one of the states, which he believed was in their best interest. The vast majority did eventually follow through with accession.

Tension and Humanitarian Crisis

The hastily drawn Radcliffe line led to the displacement of many millions of people in the region, as well as establishing tensions between the newly established dominions both around their own borders and the ownership of certain princely states. This was contributed to in part by the wish for a swift withdrawal from the region by the British, where they immediately started their military withdrawal from the region in a non-violent process that took only a few months to finish after its commencement at the start date of this conference.

In the partition, the divide of the native armed forces into that of India and Pakistan also occurred, being run by a partition Committee led by Field Marshal Claude Auchinleck, who temporarily served as the supreme commander of both countries' armed forces. The division divided the forces two third to India and one third to Pakistan, with regiments being split up based on their regional and ethnic positions. At the partition and in the near future after it, the majority of senior positions in each country's armed forces continued to be held by British people, as very few Indian or Pakistani people had reached high positions due to colonial restrictions.

Interestingly, there was no expectation that significant migration was to occur, other than its organisation in the unstable state of Punjab. The legislators expected

religious minorities to stay put in their newly allocated states, with Nehru and Gandhi fighting for and upholding the vision that a secular India could exist, with different people of different religions harmoniously co-existing. There was opposition to this, with certain diplomats fighting for a forced exchange of all religious minorities between the states, however no such thing was organised, potentially leading to the harsh migration that ended up occurring after the date of this conference. Hence, delegates are advised to consider whether other methods of navigating the aftermath of the partition could reduce the humanitarian crisis, mass migration and communal violence that occurred.

Major Parties Involved and Their Views:

India

Led by the INC, they wished to peacefully achieve both independence along with unity. Leaders such as Nehru and Gandhi wanted to see India have Hindus and Muslims live together in Harmony. However, due to growing demand of the Muslim league for a separate nation, this was difficult to achieve without avoiding a civil war. Hence, they hoped to have full sovereignty, and ensure that they were governed by Indians. Furthermore, they hoped to acquire control over as many princely states as they could, to ensure political stability and to create unity.

Pakistan

At this stage, Pakistan was being led by the All-Indian Muslim league under Muhammed Ali Jinna. Pakistani leaders sought to create a new muslim homeland due to concerns of discrimination and political marginalisation. They also aimed to acquire all the princely states with a large muslim population, including Kashmir. They argued that the only way to safeguard their Muslim identity and rights was to create a new sovereign state that enables them to govern themselves according to their own Muslim values.

United Kingdom

By 1947, The United Kingdom was in a poor financial and political state. Maintaining Control over India had also made them politically unpopular, and the economic strain meant that they could no longer maintain control over India. Hence, they hoped for a peaceful transfer of power, which maintained trade access between Britain and India, and to retain its military bases and alliances in preparation for the

cold war. Furthermore, in order to prevent a civil war, they encouraged Pakistan and India to split.

Kashmir

Kashmir was a princely state with a large muslim population, but a Hindu ruler. After the dissolution, they wished to maintain independence for as long as possible. The Maharaja of Kashmir feared that joining Pakistan would result in his authority being lost due to the large muslim population, and joining India could limit his royal authority. Kashmir was wanted by both India and Pakistan due to its geopolitical value, natural resources, and symbolic importance.

UN Involvement, Relevant Resolutions, Treaties and Events:

Due to the fact that the UN is relatively new as of the time being, no resolutions, peacekeeper missions or other forms of interventions have been installed regarding the issue of the British Raj.

Key treaties:

Indian Independence Act 1947: The act created two new independent dominions; India and Pakistan. Pakistan was split into Pakistan and East Pakistan which is now Bangladesh. The Bengal and Punjab provinces were partitioned between the two new countries. These dominions separated the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh population and caused the biggest forced migration which has ever happened that was not the result of war or famine. The Act repealed the use of 'Emperor of India' as a title for the British Crown and ended all existing treaties with the princely states. Lord Mountbatten continued as Governor-General and Jawaharlal Nehru was appointed India's first Prime Minister, Muhammad Ali Jinnah became Pakistan's Governor-General and Liaquat Ali Khan its Prime Minister.

Treaties with Princely States: A series of treaties with independent states within India that Great Britain didn't conquer. It created a system of British paramountcy, where the states maintained internal autonomy but surrendered external sovereignty, such as control over foreign policy and military affairs, in exchange for protection and subsidies. All treaties are terminated following the Indian Independence Act.

Mountbatten Plan: The 3 June 1947 plan proposed by Viceroy Lord Mountbatten, accepting the partition of British India into India and Pakistan with

dominion status. It set August 15, 1947, as the transfer date and allowed princely states to accede to either dominion based on geography and population.

Cabinet Mission 1946: The Cabinet Mission Plan was a statement made by the Cabinet Mission and the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, on May 16, 1946, that contained proposals regarding the constitutional future of India in the wake of Indian political parties and representatives not coming to an agreement. It proposed a three-tier federal structure (Union, groups of provinces, individual provinces) while rejecting the two nation theory. It led to the formation of a Constituent Assembly but failed due to Congress-League disagreements.

Possible Solutions:

Controlled Migration: As significant communal violence, discrimination and pressure on religious minorities drove the sheer mass of migration between the states of India and Pakistan, creating a significant loss to human life, delegates could consider one of the proposed solutions at the time. That being the controlled movement of peoples between the two states. Potentially, by opening up avenues for safe and voluntary migration between the two states, the humanitarian crisis could be reduced or avoided entirely.

Slower British Withdrawal: As the want, mostly from the British, but also from the Indian/Pakistani representatives, to remove British involvement from the region quickly led to the poorly thought through Radcliffe line, and the British leaving the two dominions in a state of confusion and instability, a slower transition towards independence could allow a more peaceful shift that leaves the region in a position of stability.

One state solution: The creation of a single, secular state, as British India was, just with Independence, could reduce the humanitarian crisis from the migration, and potentially leave the region in a stable state, as well as allowing an easier transition towards independence. However, there would evidently be heavy objection to this solution, making it an interesting one to debate.

Further fragmentation: The generalisation of peoples in each state by religion led to challenges for certain minorities to survive and fit into the new states. Hence, potentially, a further fragmentation into smaller regions, with stronger cultural ties holding the smaller states together, could lead to more, smaller, but more stable states being established. Furthermore, this could allow the princely

states to retain their independence, without the pressure of a major power they would need to accede to.

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India-Pakistan partition explained
Full Indian Independence Act
Mountbatten Plan Summarised
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