



Myth of the Breakup of Pakistan

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Report Author

Khurram Malik specializes in geopolitics, defense and history bringing a fantastic understanding to global conflicts. He is a open-source intelligence specialist, able to connect various parts of seeming unconnected story to develop a clear, actionable analysis.

About CommandEleven

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Every year, the 16th of December brings with it a painful reminder of the fall of Dhaka 1971, resulting in various myths being associated with this national tragedy.

The biggest myth repeated every year by some of our pseudo-intellectuals is the state of Pakistan that was created in light of Allama Iqbal's dream, the idea of Chaudhry Rehmat Ali and the Two Nation Theory of Quaid-e-Azam Mohammad Ali Jinnah has been lost. Today's Pakistan is only half of the country envisioned by the founding fathers, thereby casting aspirations upon the legitimacy of the very struggle of the Pakistan Movement, and sacrifice of millions of lives lost at independence. In order to debunk this myth, it is necessary to reflect upon the political factors that place East Bengal's union with Pakistan in its proper historical context.

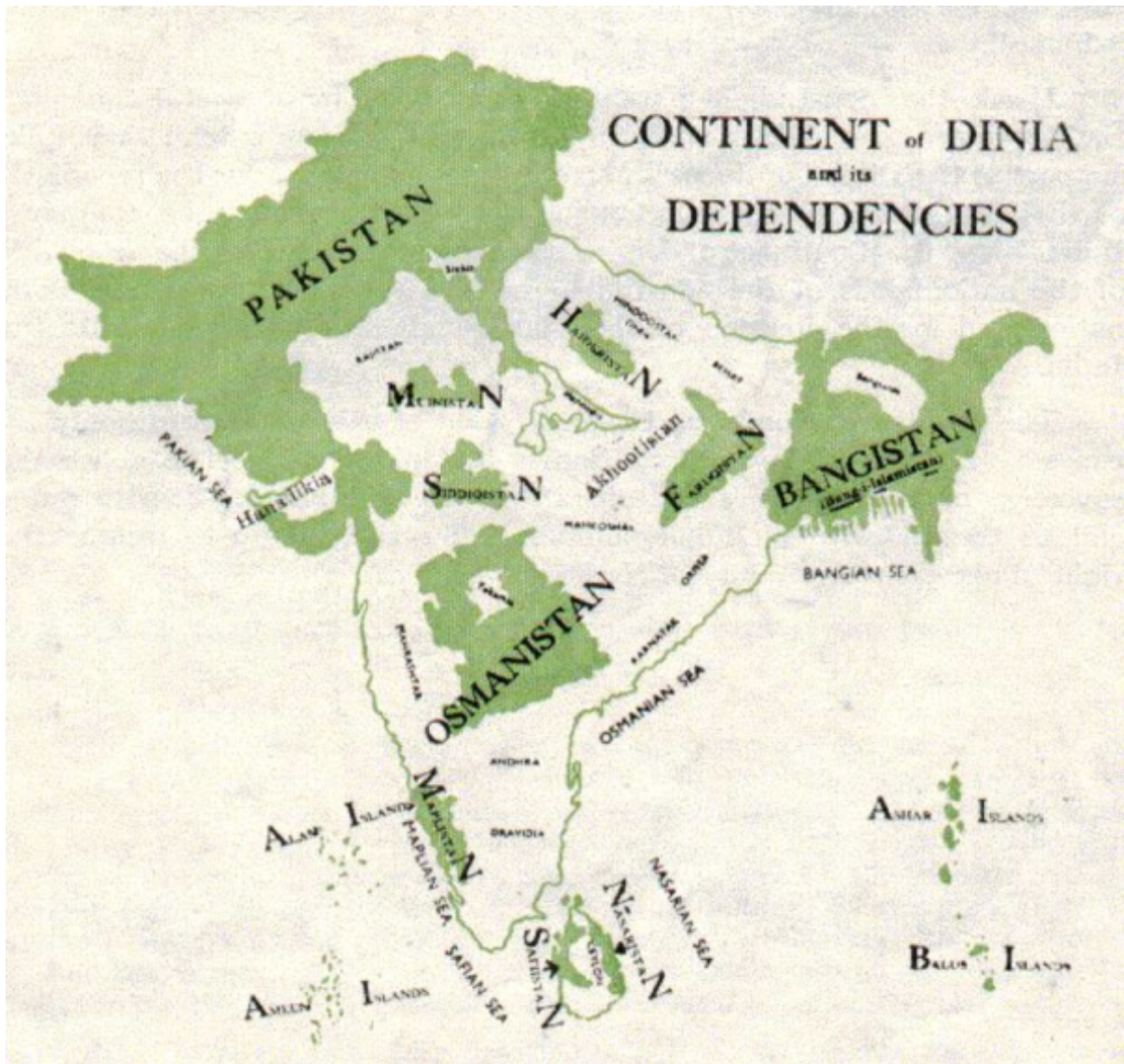
All India Muslim League was formed in the year 1906 to secure the rights of Muslims of subcontinent within the constitutional limits of the British Raj, founders of Muslim League considered Urdu the representative language of the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent, and all its resolutions were drawn in Urdu. However, Muslim political leaders from Bengal deemed the political interests of Bengali Muslims unique to Bengal politics, and therefore on the 2nd of March 1912, they formed Bengal Provincial Muslim League in Dhaka, as a branch of the parent organisation of All India Muslim League. A significant difference was that its resolutions were drawn in Bangla, and their politics focused solely on the welfare of Muslims of Bengal. Hussain Shaheed Suhrawardy, Abdul Hasheem, and AK Fazle Haq remained at the helm of its affairs, and the central Muslim League dealt with Bengal politics only through BPML.



The idea of a separate state as a homeland for the Muslims of subcontinent was envisioned by Allama Iqbal, when on the 29th December 1930, he delivered a monumental address, where he said:

"I would like to see the Punjab, North-West Frontier Province, Sind and Baluchistan amalgamated into a single State. Self-government within the British Empire, or without the British Empire, the formation of a consolidated North-West Indian Muslim State appears to me to be the final destiny of the Muslims, at least of North-West India."

This dream of Iqbal only consisted upon the current four provinces of Pakistan, and did not include the province of Bengal, knowing full well the practical impossibility of uniting all Muslim populated areas of the subcontinent into a single state.



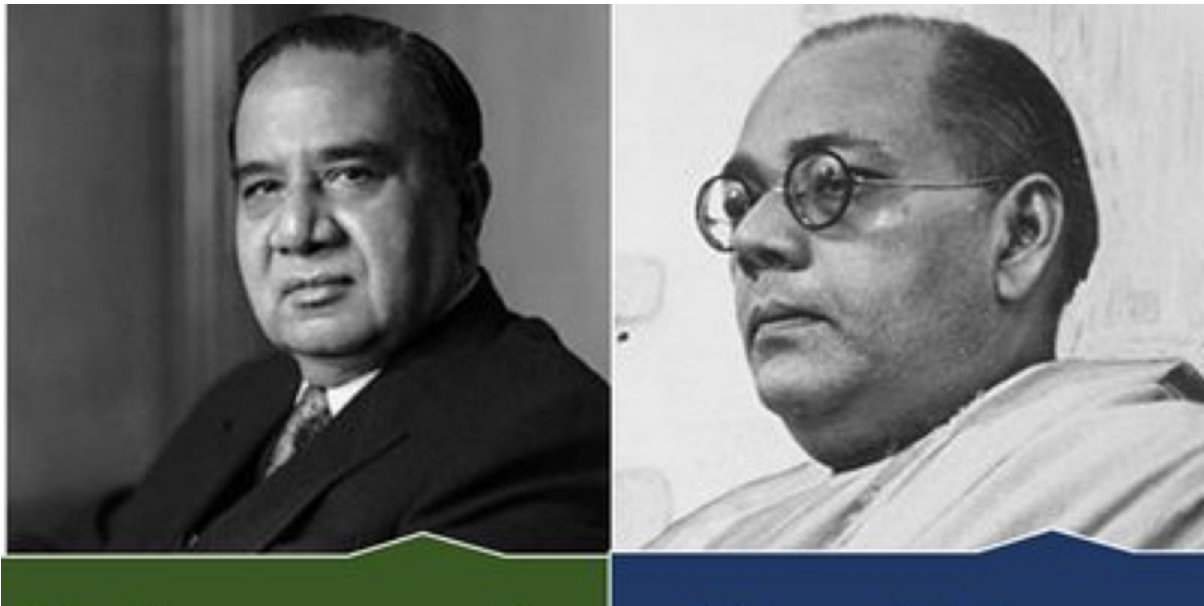
The concrete concept of Pakistan as an independent state was conceived by Chaudhry Rahmat Ali, when he published a pamphlet on 28th January 1933 titled "Now or Never; Are We to Live or Perish Forever?"

The word Pakistan referred to the five northern units of British India with 'P' for Punjab, 'A' for Afghania (North-West Province of KPK), 'K' for Kashmir, 'S' for Sindh and 'STAN' for the province of Balochistan.

He wrote, "At this solemn hour in the history of India, when British and Indian delegates are laying the foundations of a Federal Constitution for that Sub-continent, we address this appeal to you, in the name of our common heritage, and on behalf of our thirty million Muslim brethren who live in PAKISTAN by which we mean the five Northern units of India viz: Punjab, North-West Frontier Province (Afghan Province), Kashmir, Sind, and Baluchistan."

Here again, Bengal was not envisioned as being a part of the future state of Pakistan, but he rather presented it as a separate state of “Bangistan” or “Bangalistan,” as a future homeland of the Muslims of northeastern part of British India.

Even Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah did not consider Bengal as an eastern wing of a future state of Pakistan, and it was therefore he encouraged the leaders of Bengal Provincial Muslim League to campaign for an independent state of Bengal which came to be known as the United Bengal Movement.



BPML leaders themselves realised that the rights of the Muslims of Bengal would be best protected within an independent state of undivided Bengal, with the coal mines, and the jute mills of eastern Bengal supplying the industrial plants in west Bengal. Most important of all was Calcutta, then the largest city in India as an industrial, commercial hub and the largest port would provide a solid foundation for Bengal as an independent country. They campaigned vigorously for a United Bengal with full support of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah.

Towards this goal HS Suhrawardy, Abdul Haseem, and Fazlul Qadir Chaudhry entered into negotiations with Bengal provincial congress leaders such as Sarat Chandra Bose, Satya Ranjan Bakshi and Kiran Shankar Roy. These negotiations succeeded to such a great extent that they even issued a formal proposal for the Free State of Bengal with the blessing of the British Governor of Bengal Sir Frederick John Burrows on the 20th of May 1947.

Independence of a United Bengal only failed due to vehement opposition of Hindu Mahasabha’s Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, Nehru and Patel of Indian National Congress, who feared losing Calcutta as the industrial powerhouse of West Bengal and a major port city. They brought to bear the all their political power and goodwill on Lord Mountbatten to campaign against this proposal. Not only did they reject the plan, they even sought the partition of Bengal along communal lines. This aggravated Hindu-Muslim tensions, and on June 3rd 1947, British Viceroy Lord Mountbatten announced plans for the partition, and division of Bengal along communal lines. Thus, forever burying the idea of an independent Bengal. Madhuri Bose, the niece of Subhas Chandra Bose, in her book

published in 2016, clearly held Congress responsible for the failure of a United Bengal as an independent country.

After it became apparent that if Bengal is to be an independent state, it would only comprise upon areas of East Bengal. When it was realized that such a state would almost certainly prove economically, politically, and socially disastrous; only then did BPML leaders approach Central Muslim League leadership, and sought to join the dominion of Pakistan as its eastern province at partition.

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah knew full well that Kolkata was the center of Bengal's economic and social development. All large industries, military bases, government offices and most of the institutions of higher education were situated in West Bengal, without which East Bengal was decapitated. Dhaka, at that time, was only a district headquarters and even the majority of high-ranking officers in British Indian administration were Hindu, who would migrate to West Bengal. Hence, East Bengal was accepted as the eastern wing of an independent Pakistan in spite of its limited resources.

This union was formed specifically to support the Muslim population of Bengal to be able to develop their economic, political, and administrative structures free of any Hindu political hegemony. Perhaps, with an understanding that East Bengal would be able to gain autonomy at a later date, when it is strong enough to survive being surrounded by a Hindu dominated India.



It was entirely in this context that Quaid-e-Azam did not relent on the acceptance of Bangla as one of the official languages of Pakistan, since it would open the door to ethnic and linguistic tensions in the newly independent state of Pakistan with every ethnic group claiming space for its regional language, without the adoption of a national language for all the regions of Pakistan. The ethnic and linguistic tensions between eastern and western wings of Pakistan remained despite Bengali political leaders such as Khawaja Nazimuddin, Mohammed Ali Bogra, Huseyn Suhrawardy and Fazlul Qadir Chaudhry occupying the highest national offices of the state.

The Two-Unit system was created specifically to provide political space to the ethnic and linguistic aspirations of the eastern province, but tensions remains further stoked, in part by Indian sponsored seditious activities by Awami League leaders. An increasing realization developed among all parties that the union was proving to be unnatural. However, the Awami League was infested with Indian-sponsored politicians, who not only worked towards an independent Bangladesh, but conspired for a breakup of Pakistan into many provinces.

This conspiracy was uncovered by the ISI and became known as the Agartala Conspiracy Case. In 2010, Shaukat Ali, the surviving conspirator and Deputy Speaker of the Bangladesh Parliament, confessed proudly on record, at a point of order in Bangladesh parliament, that the charges read out to them during Agartala conspiracy case were accurate, stating that he along with Sheikh Mujib were a part of the 'Shangram Parishad' (Action Committee) for the secession of East Pakistan.

Henry Kissinger, the former US Secretary of State, in the December 2016 issue of 'The Atlantic,' told Jeffrey Goldberg, in a fairly exhaustive interview, that he and Nixon had already reached a deal with President Yahya Khan in November 1971, where Pakistan would grant independence to Bangladesh in March 1972.

From the very beginning, not only the founding fathers of Pakistan, leaders of the Pakistan Movement, politicians of the All India Muslim League, even leaders of Bengal Provincial Muslim League (later Awami League) leadership never considered Bengal as an integral part of Pakistan. It was a union of convenience, that provided no strategic advantage to West Pakistan, and was created specifically to support and benefit the Muslim population of East Bengal, against religious domination of Hindu political forces of India.

Hence, on the 16th of December each year, though we may regret the tragic end to the union of East Pakistan with West Pakistan, we must not mourn this date as the breakup of Pakistan, for Pakistan survives.

Through ups and the downs, trials and tribulations, war and unrest the Pakistan of Iqbal, the Pakistan of Chaudhry Rehmat Ali and the Pakistan of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah is alive and well.

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