**Debunking Kashmir myths**

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Alastair Lamb, a British diplomatic historian, passed away at the age of 93. He was well-known for his expertise in modern Kashmir and his extensive research on the events leading up to the conflict in 1947-8. Lamb was born in China in 1930 while his father was working for the British diplomatic service. During World War II, his parents were interned by the Japanese while he was in the care of his grandfather in Britain. Lamb was a meticulous researcher who generously shared his knowledge with other historians.

The Kashmir conflict has been a contentious issue between India and Pakistan for decades. Amidst the complex history and politics surrounding the conflict, there are various myths and misconceptions that have become prevalent over time. However, Alastair Lamb’s research on Kashmir aims to challenge these myths and provide a more accurate understanding of the issue. Lamb’s research primarily focuses on dispelling myths related to the accession of Kashmir and aggression towards it. The accession of Kashmir to India in 1947 is a key event in the conflict’s history, and there are various myths surrounding it. One such myth is that the Maharaja of Kashmir, Hari Singh, willingly acceded to India. However, Lamb’s research shows that this was not the case. In reality, the Maharaja was hesitant about choosing between India and Pakistan and initially wanted to remain independent. India’s leaders, however, pressured him into acceding to India. Lamb’s research thus challenges the commonly held belief that the accession was a voluntary act by the Maharaja.

[Machine operator killed during anti-encroachment operation](https://www.nation.com.pk/10-May-2023/machine-operator-killed-during-anti-encroachment-operation)

Another myth that Lamb challenges is that Pakistan has been the aggressor in the Kashmir conflict. While Pakistan has supported separatist movements in the region, Lamb argues that India has also played a role in the violence and aggression towards Kashmiris. He notes that Indian forces have committed human rights abuses in the region, including extrajudicial killings, torture, and enforced disappearances. Lamb’s research emphasizes the need to address both India’s and Pakistan’s roles in the conflict to find a lasting solution. India’s narrative about the disputed region of Kashmir is based on myths, such as Pakistan’s aggression through Army regulars and Maharaja Hari Singh’s signing of the treaty of accession with India in 1947. However, according to Alastair Lamb, India’s march into Kashmir without the Maharaja’s permission was a blatant act of aggression. Lamb notes that Mountbatten had advised India to not intervene militarily without first obtaining the “instrument of accession” from the Maharaja, but India did not follow this advice. The timing of the alleged instrument of accession affected its legitimacy, and it could be argued that it was either done under Indian duress or to regularize an Indian fait accompli. These points are covered in Lamb’s book ‘Incomplete Partition’ and Bhasin’s ‘India and Pakistan: Neighbours at Odds’, which is a 10-volume study of India-Pakistan relations containing 3649 official documents. The ‘Selected Works of Jawaharlal Nehru’ is another useful resource book on this topic.

[Korean Mission of UN-Habitat for Pakistan calls on Karachi Administrator](https://www.nation.com.pk/10-May-2023/korean-mission-of-un-habitat-for-pakistan-calls-on-karachi-administrator)

Lamb claims that the Instrument of Accession supposedly signed by the Maharajah of Kashmir on October 26, 1947, was fraudulent. He argues that the Maharajah was on the run for his life and traveling to Jammu at the time, making it unlikely that he could have signed the instrument. There is no evidence of any contact between him and the Indian emissaries on that day. Lamb also notes that Indian troops had already arrived and secured Srinagar airfield by mid-October, and a further airlift of troops took place on October 26. The Instrument of Accession, if it was signed at all, was likely signed by the Maharajah after Indian troops had assumed control of Srinagar.

The United Nations has outlawed the so-called accession of Kashmir, and the resolutions passed by the occupied Kashmir’s constituent assembly are void. The UN has passed two resolutions, Resolution No. 9 of March 30, 1951, and Resolution No. 122 of March 24, 1957, to forestall any attempts to legitimize the accession. The Instrument of Accession is not registered with the United Nations. India took the Kashmir issue to the UN in 1948 under Chapter VI, not VII, and Nehru disowned the accession. The book “Kashmir: A disputed legacy 1846-1990” by Alastair Lamb documents Nehru’s changing positions on the issue of Kashmir. Despite post-Nehru equivocal rhetoric, the Kashmir Question remains on the General Assembly’s agenda, with the UN Military Observers’ Military Group on duty. The legal basis of India’s position on Kashmir rests on the mythical ‘instrument of accession’ and its endorsement by the disputed state’s assembly, which is not recognized by the UN. Therefore, the legal debates in India’s Supreme Court about the status of Kashmir are irrelevant. The UN charter and the right to self-determination are paramount. India’s repression and terror in Kashmir are attempts to suppress the truth.

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Alastair Lamb’s research on Kashmir sheds light on the complexity of the conflict and the need to challenge myths and misconceptions surrounding it. By providing a more accurate understanding of the issue, Lamb’s work can help in finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict that considers the perspectives of all stakeholders involved.