

# Cricket- Diplomacy in South Asia

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**Question:**

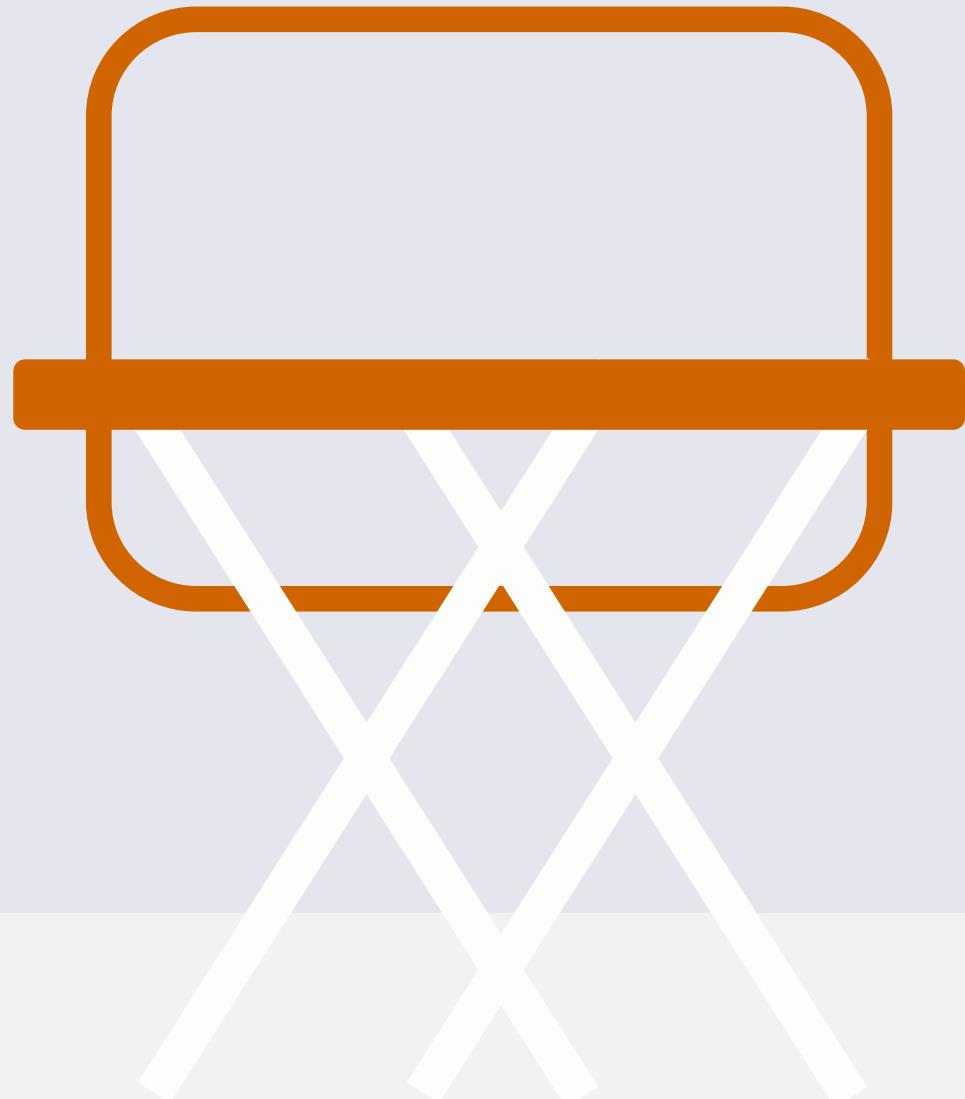
*Despite current tensions, can  
cricket-diplomacy promote unity  
among South Asian countries?*

# Subtopic:

## Sports-Diplomacy

# Sports-diplomacy

- Using the cultural unity of sports for diplomacy
  - Ex. *Ping-pong diplomacy*
- Cold war threats have forced nations to investigate “softer” diplomacies like sport-diplomacy<sup>8</sup>
- Two sides: unity vs tribalism<sup>8</sup>



## Sport as a Uniting Force

- HOOPS showcases basketball throughout the world and implies that sport has a universal appeal
- Elements of the game persist despite its environment<sup>2</sup>
- Despite large **cultural differences**, the game is universal



# Sport as a Dividing Force

- George Orwell (1968) attributes “sporting spirit” to ruining international relations
- People aligned themselves in controversy in accordance with their nationality during the Glasgow match<sup>10</sup>
- Moreover, Orwell reasons that the **competitive nature** of sport can only lead to division

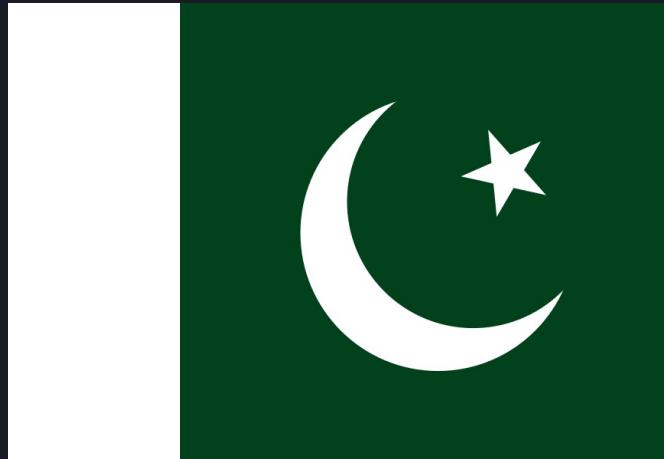
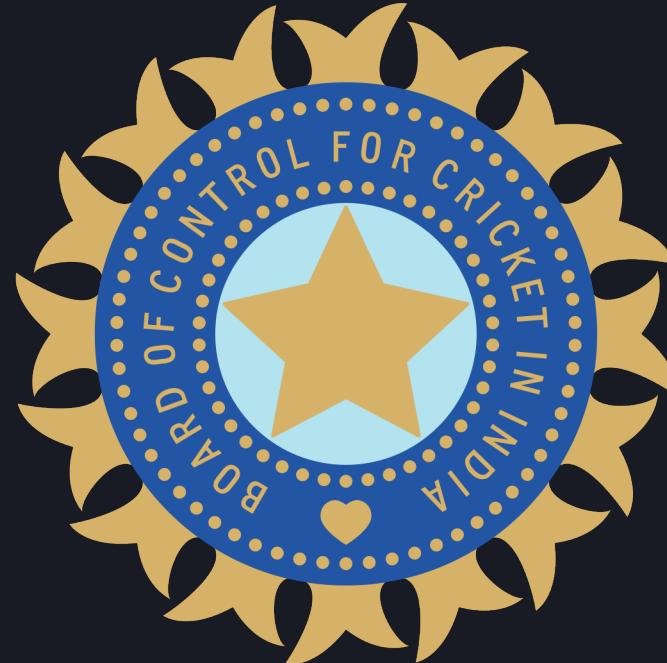
<sup>10</sup>Orwell, G. (1968)

## Sport as a Vent for Tensions

Although sport may be considered tribal, it can be a vent for tensions, taking less violent actions.<sup>9</sup>

**Subtopic:**

**Indian and Pakistan**



# Cricket Corruption

- Because of India's "sheer market size," it has much control over the sport<sup>1</sup>
- India, as part of the **Big Three**, already takes much of the profits<sup>6</sup>
- BCCI is preventing the spread of cricket<sup>6</sup>
- India can win in cricket conflicts with Pakistan, furthering the divide

<sup>1</sup>Ayres, A. (2015)

<sup>6</sup>Memon, A. (2012)



## Animosity Between India and Pakistan

- British colonialism led to increasing nationalism and subsequent division after the drawing of borders by the British<sup>13</sup>
- Kashmir was brought up when a “former Pakistani captain...and ex-India opener” fought on Twitter<sup>4</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Upreti, B. C. (2006)

<sup>3</sup>India, Pakistan cricketers spar over Kashmir (2018)

# Players as Positive Advocates

- Female athletes are advancing gender equality by “using their status to start important conversations”<sup>7</sup>
- Cricket players can have major political and cultural power (Ex. Imran Khan)
- Players are more careful to appease both nations and appear **cordial**<sup>4</sup>

<sup>7</sup>Mlambo-Ngcuka, P. (2019)

<sup>4</sup>Ingle, S. (2019)

**Subtopic:**

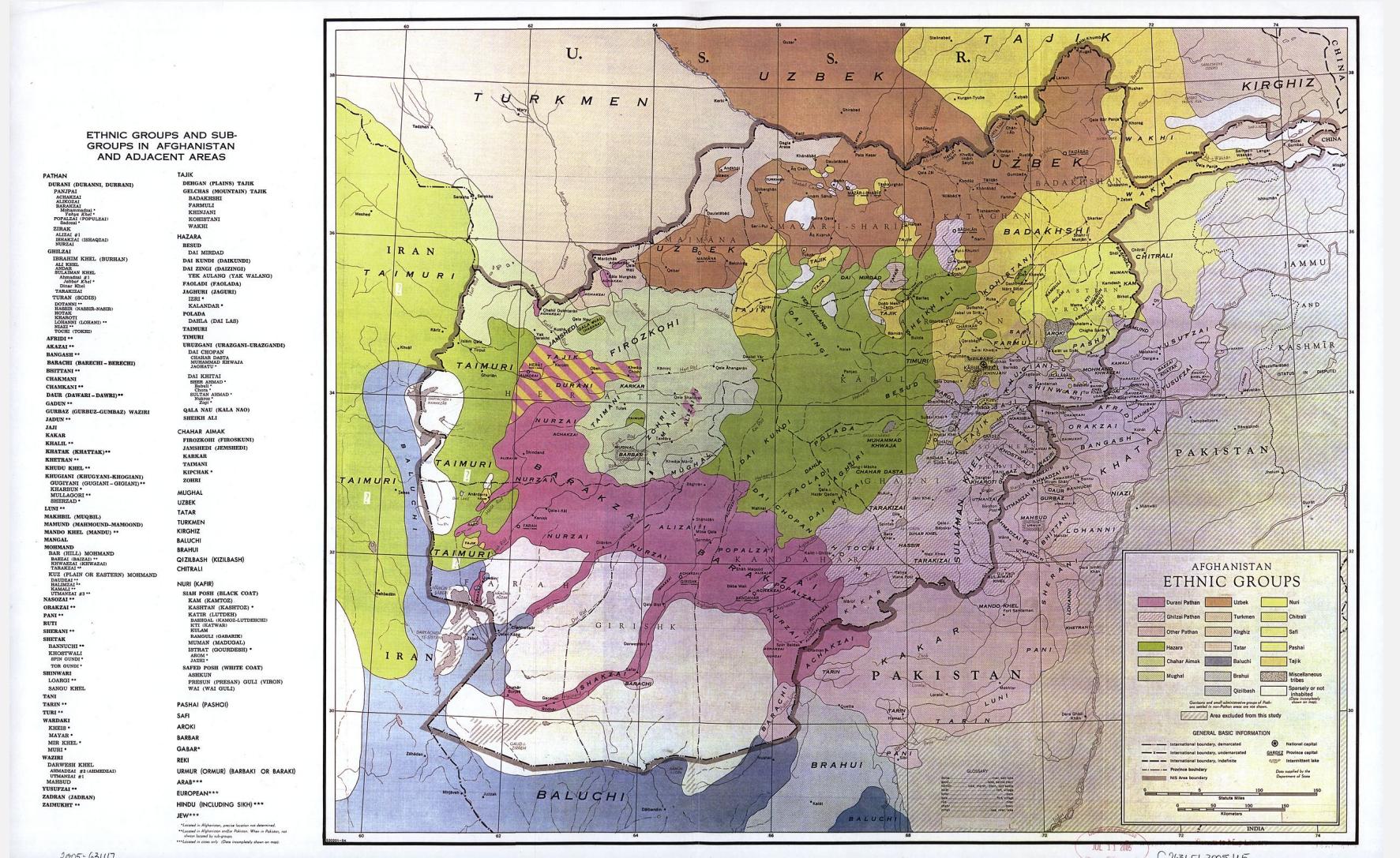
**Afghanistan's Cricket  
Success**

# Success of Cricket

- Cricket has been regarded as a national success: “[the cricket team is] a model of how to meet tough international challenges with skill, dedication and teamwork” – Hillary Clinton<sup>14</sup>
- Success galvanized the public under the team’s spirit



<sup>14</sup>U.S.-Afghanistan strategic partnership discussions (2010)



# Cricket Unity

- Cricket's unity of the region has led to efforts being spent on cricket rather than on war<sup>11</sup>
  - "The sport crosses all ethnic divides"<sup>11</sup>
  - If cricket can help unite Afghanistan, why not the rest of the world?

## *<sup>11</sup>The rise of afghan cricket (n.d.)*

**Subtopic:**

**Cricket in the Olympics**

# Cricket-diplomacy through the Olympics

- Opportunity to spread the game:
  - Dilutes power of the *Big Three*, which will remove *cricket corruption*<sup>1</sup>
  - Prevents nationalistic disputes by the watch of the world stage
- Brings the game to counties beyond the commonwealth nations, further increasing Cricket-diplomacy influence<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ayres, A. (2015)

<sup>6</sup>Memon, A. (2012)

# Cricket feasibility

- Cricket was introduced unsuccessfully in the Commonwealth Games in the late 1990s<sup>6</sup>
- However, since then, cricket has developed the Twenty20 match, which is played on the timescale of other Olympic sports<sup>6</sup>
- Cricket is “pivot[ing] to Asia” with a growing fan base in India and Pakistan<sup>1</sup>
- 2<sup>nd</sup> most popular sport in the world (2.5 billion followers)<sup>15</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Memon, A. (2012)

<sup>1</sup>Ayres, A. (2015)

<sup>15</sup> Shvili, J. (2020)

# Conclusion



Cricket corruption and historic animosity threaten to undermine cricket-diplomacy, but cricket is cordial though players and unites people of different backgrounds. Moreover, cricket-diplomacy shows even greater promise of unity if added to the Olympics.



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# Q&A