

The Ojhri Camp disaster was a tragic incident that occurred during the era of General Zia-ul-Haq in Pakistan. On April 10, 1988, a massive explosion took place at the Ojhri Camp, a weapons and ammunition depot located near Islamabad. The disaster resulted in significant loss of life, destruction of property, and raised questions about the management and safety of military installations.

1. **Background and Purpose of Ojhri Camp:** The Ojhri Camp was established in the late 1970s as a storage and distribution center for military equipment, ammunition, and supplies. Its primary objective was to support the Afghan resistance (mujahideen) during the Soviet-Afghan War. The camp played a vital role in providing logistical support to the Afghan fighters, with weapons and ammunition being channeled through it.
2. **The Incident:** On the fateful day of April 10, 1988, a series of explosions occurred at the Ojhri Camp. The initial explosion was followed by a chain reaction, causing multiple blasts throughout the camp. The explosions sent a massive plume of smoke and debris into the air, which could be seen from miles away. The scale of the disaster was immense, resulting in widespread devastation and loss of life.
3. **Casualties and Damage:** The exact number of casualties remains disputed, but estimates suggest that hundreds of people lost their lives in the disaster, including military personnel, civilians, and nearby residents. Many others suffered injuries, and a significant number of houses and buildings in the surrounding areas were destroyed or damaged.
4. **Causes and Investigations:** The exact causes of the explosions at the Ojhri Camp have been a subject of debate. While the incident was initially attributed to a stray missile hitting an ammunition dump, subsequent investigations suggested other possible factors. Some reports indicated that mishandling of explosives, negligence, and inadequate storage facilities contributed to the disaster.
5. **Government Response and Aftermath:** Following the disaster, the Zia-ul-Haq government faced criticism for its handling of the incident and the lack of transparency in providing information to the public. Rescue and relief efforts were launched to aid the affected individuals and rebuild the affected areas. The government established a commission to investigate the incident and determine responsibility for the disaster.
6. **Implications and Lessons Learned:** The Ojhri Camp disaster raised important questions about the management and safety protocols of military installations in Pakistan. It highlighted the need for improved oversight, accountability, and better infrastructure for the storage and handling of explosive materials. The incident also underscored the importance of effective emergency response mechanisms and the need to prioritize public safety.

In conclusion, the Ojhri Camp disaster during the Zia era was a tragic event that resulted in significant loss of life and property. It brought attention to the need for better safety measures and management practices in military installations. The incident remains a

somber reminder of the importance of ensuring the security and well-being of both military personnel and civilians in and around such facilities