

Kashmir Dispute: Nuclear Threat for Regional Peace and Stability

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Abstract



This article explores the history and analyses the foundations of India's and Pakistan's complicated, violent, and persistent Kashmir conflict. Since 1947, the Kashmir problem has been a domestic issue for both nations; it also plagues ties between India and Pakistan, as well as between the two South Asian neighbors and other countries in the area. In many aspects, the Kashmir conflict is an ethnic, religious, and geographical problem with geopolitical and economic implications for both India and Pakistan. Both countries claim Kashmir on legal and moral grounds. Meanwhile, many Kashmiris have essentially accepted the existing quo and have essentially abandoned their demand for self-determination. A significant rebellion against Indian control, which began in 1989 and was spearheaded by Kashmiri Muslims, has transformed the face of Kashmir to the point that gun culture has turned the legendary paradise into a martyr's tomb. Many in Pakistan and India think that having nuclear weapons and a reliable delivery system offers them a credible deterrent and reduces the likelihood of conflict. As a result, they conclude that the area has attained stability via deterrence. But what impact would the 1998 nuclear tests have on resolving the Kashmir conflict? This essay investigates this subject and considers how both nations might be able to resolve the conflict without suffering more human or material losses.

Keywords: Kashmir Issue, Pakistan, India, and Conflict

Introduction

Territorial disputes over Kashmir were the catalyst for two of the three main Indo-Pakistani hostilities, which began in 1947 and 1965 and included a brief fighting in 1999. Despite a fragile truce that has been in place since 2003, both countries persist in engaging in hostilities along the disputed Line of Control. Both factions allege that the other violates the cease-fire, with each side responding to the other's assaults with gunfire. The Line of Control witnessed a surge in border confrontations from late 2016 to 2018, resulting in numerous casualties and the displacement of thousands of individuals.

There were hopes that the Modi administration would hold genuine peace negotiations with Pakistan after then-Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi greeted then-Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif upon his appointment in 2014. In August 2014, India postponed discussions with Pakistan's foreign minister due to the Pakistani high commissioner in India engaging with separatist leaders in Kashmir, which led to a deterioration in the relationship between the two countries after a short time of hope. In 2015, several events took place, including an undisclosed meeting in December on the outskirts of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris. A subsequent national security advisors conference took place in Bangkok, during which the Kashmir dispute was deliberated. In the following month, Prime Minister Modi made an unexpected trip to Lahore to have a meeting with Prime Minister Mr. Nawaz Sharif, who is known for his background in farming. This visit was significant because it was the first time in more than ten years that an Indian leader had visited Pakistan.

The migration of Islamic militants and proxy organizations from Afghanistan to Kashmir poses a significant risk of intensifying border violence. If Pakistan's militant proxies were to carry out a similar attack to the Mumbai 2008 incident, where Lashkar-e-Taiba terrorists rampaged across the city for four days, resulting in the death of 164 individuals, it could potentially ignite a significant military clash between the two governments, both of which possess nuclear weapons.

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Research Questions

1. What will be the impact of the Kashmir dispute on regional peace and stability?
2. Is there any possibility of nuclear war over the Kashmir dispute?

Research Methodology

This study is purely a qualitative study in which secondary data has been analyzed to find answers to research questions. This is based on critical and logical analysis of secondary data in the form of books, newspaper articles, and journals. A comprehensive review has been taken through the literature review and reached a conclusion

Objectives of the Study

1. To find out the nature of the Kashmir dispute
2. To highlight the future implications of the Kashmir dispute

Overview of the Kashmir Conflict

The current situation in Kashmir and the presence of extremist organizations based in Pakistan have heightened tensions and concerns about a potential military clash between India and Pakistan, both of which possess nuclear weapons. In August 2019, the Indian government made an effort to eliminate Article 370 of the Indian constitution, which would remove the unique status of Jammu and Kashmir. This action was taken after deploying a large number of army and paramilitary personnel to the region. Kashmir, under Indian administration, continues to see frequent lockdowns, with periodic disruptions to internet and phone services, and the detainment of several individuals.

The Origins of the Conflict

The unexpected division of the region into Pakistan and India in 1947 caused millions of people to flee between the two nations, resulting in religious bloodshed that killed hundreds of thousands of people. Jammu and Kashmir, a Muslim-majority territory in the Himalayas that had been controlled by a native prince, was left unresolved. Fighting erupted fast, and both nations deployed soldiers, with Pakistan controlling approximately a third of the state and India the remainder.

The prince signed an agreement that India would annex the land. Article 370, which established regional autonomy, was a major motivator. Despite UN efforts to arbitrate the Kashmir issue, India and Pakistan continue to manage their sectors of the erstwhile princely region in the hopes of gaining complete sovereignty. Both sides of the so-called line of control fire volleys at each other regularly.

Article 370 Changing Pattern of Regional Geographical Location

Shortly after British India was partitioned, Article 370 was introduced to the Indian constitution to provide the erstwhile princely state of Jammu and Kashmir autonomy until a decision was reached on its rule. It curtailed India's central government's authority over the country's territory. A similar measure allowed state politicians the authority to select who may buy land and become a permanent resident, which enraged many non-Kashmiris.

Article 370 states that it may only be repealed with the approval of the legislative body that established the state constitution, even though it was meant to be transitory. That committee was disbanded in 1957, and India's top court determined last year that Article 370 is now an inalienable component of the country's constitution.

Origin of Recent Development Regarding Core issue

The immediate cause was a suicide bombing in Pulwama, Kashmir, on February 14th by a teenage Islamic extremist who blew up a convoy of vehicles transporting paramilitary soldiers. In response to the incident, Indian aircraft flew into Pakistan and launched air strikes near the town of Balakot. The Indian authorities stated the assault was on a training camp for the terrorist organization Jaish-e-Mohammed, which claimed responsibility for the blast.

Pakistani and Indian fighter jets clashed over Indian-controlled territory the next day, with Pakistani troops shooting down an Indian aircraft — an outdated Soviet-era MiG-21 — and capturing its pilot. It was the first time the adversaries had collided in the air in almost 50 years.

The pilot was swiftly returned to Pakistan, alleviating diplomatic tensions. However, during his re-election campaign, Modi used a surge of nationalist fervor over the Pulwama assault to help his Bhartiya Janata Party achieve a landslide victory.

Possibility of Destabilization of the Region

When asked if he shared Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi's fears of a nuclear-armed conflict between the two countries, he said: "Without a doubt. What is occurring is that India is committing

genocide in the form of genocide. I don't believe there has been anything like it since Nazi Germany in terms of racial attacks on the populace. For a duration exceeding six weeks, a population of eight million Muslims in Kashmir has been subjected to a state of siege. The potential for this situation to escalate into a conflict between India and Pakistan arises from India's deliberate efforts to divert attention from its unlawful annexation of Kashmir and the imminent occurrence of a large-scale violent incident in the region. "By attributing terrorism to Pakistan, they are deflecting focus from the issue at hand." In February, a young Kashmiri individual tragically took their own life by detonating explosives near an Indian military convoy. India subsequently accused Pakistan of responsibility and carried out airstrikes against us.

"So, we're afraid that this will happen again because what they're doing in Kashmir will elicit a reaction, some sort of reaction, and they'll blame Pakistan for it to deflect attention away from the slaughter in Kashmir."

In response to a question concerning the country's stance on nuclear weapons first use, he stated:

"There is no ambiguity. I stated unequivocally that Pakistan would never initiate a conflict, and I stand by that statement. I am a pacifist and anti-war activist, but I made it obvious that if two nuclear-armed countries fight a conventional war, they will almost certainly end up in a nuclear war."

If a conventional war is conducted, the prime minister threatened, "Pakistanis would fight to the death for their independence."

He stated, "It has ramifications when a nuclear-armed country battles to the death. That is why we have sought the United Nations, as well as every other international forum, pleading with them to act immediately because this is a potential tragedy that will spread well beyond the Indian subcontinent."

Burning issue Discussed at UNGA

"Pakistan is one of the few countries in the world that is particularly sensitive to climate change. I would have gone into great detail about it, as well as Islamophobia: how Muslims suffer as a result of it, notably in Western nations and, of course, in India. But because of what is occurring in Kashmir, I will mostly discuss the situation there."

Dialogue or No Dialogue between Nuclear Power

"From the moment I entered office, which was last August. We have made repeated attempts to establish a discussion with India, for us to live as civilized neighbors, to settle our disagreements," he stated when questioned about his views on dialogue with India.

He stated that Kashmir was the sole issue that needed to be handled by a political settlement, which is why trade between Pakistan and India is so vital.

"Both nations suffer from poverty, both countries face a massive approaching tragedy from climate change, both of us have comparable difficulties, therefore, I addressed them and suggested that we continue negotiations and work out our disagreements, which we attempted several times," Prime Minister Imran added.

"Now I see that our gestures were misunderstood. This extreme right-wing, racist, fascist BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party) administration treated us as if we were afraid of them, and they regarded that as appeasement" Added he. PM Imran said that while the government was attempting to start a discussion, India was attempting to "push us onto the FATF's blacklist."

"We've been placed on the grey list. If Pakistan is placed on the "no-fly" list, penalties would be imposed. As a result, they were attempting to bankrupt us. That's when we took a step back and realized this was part of a larger plan."

"The plan was to plunge Pakistan into chaos. So, there's no use in talking to the Indian government after they unlawfully occupied Kashmir and invalidated Article 370 of their constitution" he stated. He emphasized that the action was conducted in violation of UN Security Council resolutions guaranteeing that the people will be permitted to vote in a referendum and plebiscite to choose their fate. "They have unilaterally disregarded not just international rules but also their constitution," he added, "Therefore there is no use in talking to India under these circumstances."

United States Offer

"We are thankful to US President Trump because he is the president of the most powerful country in the world and if the president of the United States intervenes in this and seriously intervenes — it is

one way that you can guarantee some sort of resolution,” the prime minister said, referring to US President Donald Trump's repeated offers to play a role in facilitating dialogue between Islamabad and New Delhi over Kashmir. Second, even if it does not intervene directly, the United States possesses veto power in the UN Security Council. That's why, in my opinion, India is resisting this notion because it knows that if the world community gets involved, the verdict would be in favor of the Kashmiris. The world community demands that the Kashmiri people use their right to self-determination.”

Involvement of the International Community

Trump invited Khan to the White House on July 22nd. Even though the discussion was primarily focused on how to end the Afghan war, Trump informed reporters that Modi had requested him to assist him in mediating the Kashmir conflict. Khan was ecstatic to be involved. The Indian administration has denied making any request for mediation and has always insisted on direct talks with Pakistan to resolve the conflict.

Under Trump, the US has changed its foreign policy away from Pakistan, a long-time beneficiary of US aid, and toward India, which the administration sees as a bulwark against China's growing influence in Asia. China, for its part, has become Pakistan's closest friend and financial backer. Recently, the Chinese government pushed India and Pakistan to resolve their differences through bilateral talks. China has a border with the Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, and the demarcation line between the two countries has yet to be agreed upon.

What is a Future Prospect?

The constitutional modifications, which were enacted by presidential order, might be challenged in court. Pakistan has stated that it will "use all feasible means" to confront India's "illegal actions." Modi's efforts to incorporate Kashmir into India are expected to be well-received across India. However, in Kashmir, where there have been decades of anti-India protests, there is widespread fear. – New York Times.

Conclusion

Ultimately, although allowing unrestricted ownership of nuclear weapons may have reduced the likelihood of large-scale warfare, it may have also intensified the inherent contradiction between stability and instability. Although the political leaderships of both governments sometimes employ strong and aggressive language, they acknowledge that war is no longer a feasible resolution to the Kashmir issue. However, it is important to note that most South Asian states are not homogeneous and unified entities. Subnational actors, such as separate governmental units, seek to promote their interests and accomplish more localized goals. The Inter-Services Intelligence Agency of Pakistan is widely believed to be providing support to Kashmiri insurgents in the Indo-Pakistani context. India's Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) has faced similar allegations over its activities in Pakistan's unstable Sindh area. Endorsing these internal conflicts could potentially result in an inadvertent intensification, especially near the volatile border of Kashmir. Consequently, although the explicit development of nuclear weapons in the area has reduced the likelihood of a large-scale war, there is still a significant risk of accidental conflict due to errors in judgment, lack of understanding, and incorrect perceptions in the region.

The Kashmir issue has been the primary catalyst for diplomatic, political, and military tensions between India and Pakistan. Both parties have recently expressed a willingness to resume bilateral conversations. An intentional conflict resolution strategy is the solution to the problem. The techniques of psychological counseling are essential for resolving this conflict. The psychological components and interpretations of the situation are more comprehensive than their military, political, and diplomatic dimensions. Contrary to the swift growth of Hindu nationalism, the resolution to the Kashmir issue lies in acknowledging that ordinary Kashmiris are entitled to a regular and tranquil life. Both India and Pakistan must undertake measures to eradicate terrorist organizations that are active in Kashmir and to maintain ongoing bilateral talks. The confidence-building measures must be executed substantially.

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