

Kashmir Dispute: Muslim Solidarity and Conflict Resolution Post Pahalgam Attack

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Abstract

The article peculiarly endeavors to sketch the historical picture of one of the most disputed territories of the world i.e., Kashmir and how this piece of beautiful land contributed not only as the integral source of distorted relationship between two rival nuclear states (Pakistan and India) and the conflict resolution of the issue. Today, the need for the resolution of Kashmir dispute, particularly after the political situation which emerged in the region after the recent conflict between India and Pakistan following the 2025 Pahalgam attack close to Pahalgam in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir, is more crucial than ever.

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INTRODUCTION

The situation in Kashmir is very volatile and has not been resolved for a very long time. Kashmir is without a doubt Pakistan and India's most important political struggle. Forsooth, the Kashmiri problem is not new; it has been plaguing Kashmir and its innocent residents with fear and agony for over 75 years, ever since the region was separated from the rest of Pakistan. What began as a territorial dispute with India has rather efficiently and successfully shifted into what seems like a prison state in Kashmir, where decades of violence have fallen on deaf ears, where even the wickedest infringements of human rights have ceased to grab the media spotlight, where mass killings are had never been scrutinized, where sexual assaults have been overshadowed. Since its beginning more than seventy-five years ago, the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan has been characterized by a series of disastrous decisions, the most recent of which was the unlawful incorporation of Kashmir into India. Since then, the conflict has reached its apex in the form of decades-long periods of bloodshed that have been marked by significant military engagements.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Gulab Singh, the ancestor of the notorious Dogra dynasty who ruled Kashmir, was able to purchase Jammu and Kashmir from its colonial masters, the British East India Company, in accordance with the stipulations of the Treaty of

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Amritsar, which was ratified on March 16, 1846. This treaty was signed at Amritsar. Freedom of expression in Kashmir was severely hampered by the Dogra family's control, which was characterized by two main features: authoritarian power and religious intolerance. Due to the fact that the state required a political structure in order to address the requirements of both the state and its residents, the All-Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference was established in 1932. However, in order to ensure that non-Muslim Kashmiris were included in the conference, the Muslim Conference was later renamed as the National Conference during the late 1930s. Politics in Kashmir became laden with challenges and animosities in the mid-1940s as a result of the close relationships that Sheikh Abdullah, the first president of the All-Jammu and Kashmir Muslim Conference, had with the Congress and its leaders.

It ultimately led to a decline in significance among the Muslims of the state as the Hindu leaders began to gain prominence, and the President of the conference was strongly oriented towards having cordial links with Hindu leadership and often attacked and criticized Jinnah. This combination of factors finally led to the decline.

In 1946, Sheikh Abdullah began a movement known as "Quit Kashmir," which challenged the moral and legal standing of the "Amritsar Treaty." Politicians from throughout the subcontinent, particularly those who were members of Congress, as well as the vast majority of Kashmiri Pandits who were members of the National Conference, all voiced their opposition to this effort. Nehru, on the other

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hand, was the one who advocated for Sheikh Abdullah by interfering in the internal politics of the state. In contrast, Jinnah's portrayal as an anti-Kashmiris weakened his position significantly as the lone Muslim delegate when he encouraged the Muslim Conference to oppose this move, labeling it "foreign-influenced." While the National Conference's 1944 "Naya Kashmir" socioeconomic plan was adopted as a manifesto and presented to Maharaja Hari Singh in an effort to transform the state from a monarchy into a democracy, its subsequent failure to prevent illegal annexation with India meant that it was never fully implemented.

562 princely states were forced to join either India or Pakistan in 1947, a wonderful year when the subcontinent had made its path toward freedom but was mostly unaware of what lay ahead. The influence of Kashmir, the largest princely state in terms of land area at 84,471 square miles (218,800 square kilometers), was pervasive across Pakistan in every aspect. The ethnic diversity of his realm made Pakistan an attractive proposition, but the Maharaja, a devout Hindu, refused to accept his land. He had few reservations about joining India, though, and thus the Maharaja pondered declaring Kashmir a separate state¹.

In accordance with the terms agreed upon by India and Pakistan, the leaders of princely states were given the choice of joining Pakistan or India, or staying

1. Mustafa, Ghulam, Muhammad Imran, and Adnan Nawa. "The Indo-Pak Rivalry and the Kashmir Issue: A Historical Analysis in." Research Gate, January 2019. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340091708_The_IndoPak_Rivalry_and_the_Kashmir_Issue_A_Historical_Analysis_in_the_Security_Context_of_the_South_Asia.

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independent with certain limitations, upon the breakup of the Indian subcontinent. Prior to October 1947, Hari Singh, maharaja of Kashmir, believed that delaying his decision would enable him to retain Kashmir's autonomy. However, he became entangled in a series of events that ended in an upheaval, particularly among the Muslim community and the meddling of the Pashtun tribal people, and so he consented to sign an Accession Instrument to the Indian union.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT; POST INDEPENDENCE

The next year, India brought the Kashmir dispute to the UN Security Council, which catapulted the conflict between India and Pakistan into the spotlight. The United Nations Security Council resolution demanded that India and Pakistan hold a referendum and disarm their respective forces in the Valley. A vote on this matter has not been held as of yet².

When India's new constitution went into effect in 1950, it recognized the Kashmir valley as an integral part of the country and gave it special status under Article 370 notwithstanding previous UN Security Council decisions to the contrary. India lost a large portion of territory, including Ladakh, to China ten years later during a conflict with the country. After a year of close cooperation, Pakistan gave China Shaksgam Valley in Kashmir as a present, further cementing the two countries' relationship. As a new player, it endorsed Pakistan's stance that the

2. Khalid Shah and Kriti M Shah, "Kashmir after Article 370: India's Diplomatic Challenge," ORF (Observer Research Paper, October 19, 2020), <https://www.orfonline.org/research/kashmir-after-article-370/>.

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issue be resolved in an ethical manner, taking into account the aspirations and preferences of the people in Kashmir who are suffering the most³. Although initially supportive of Pakistan, China ultimately adopted a more neutral stance, insisting that India and Pakistan should work out their differences individually⁴.

The following year, in 1965, then Prime Minister, Lal Bahadur Shastri's rapacity integrated the valley of Jammu and Kashmir with India, under the article 356 and 357. The consequences of this decision took a heavy toll on India and Pakistan when they went to in following year, 1965. Both acrimonious nations engaged in yet another war in the year 1971, and signed a bilateral agreement in 1972 to resolve the concerning issues especially Kashmir bilaterally without paying the horrific price of an all-out war⁵. The shining aspect of Shimla Agreement was that it also created the two nations' Line of Control (LoC), which has since operated as a de facto boundary⁶.

Kashmir issue failed to gain any limelight until after the end of cold war, it was then the issue was once again beginning to be conversed on international platforms. In 1998, when both nations overtly carried out nuclear tests, the US

3. ibid
4. I-wei, Jennifer Chang, "China's Kashmir Policies and Crisis Management in South Asia", USIP, (<https://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/PB217-China-s-Kashmir-Policies-and-Crisis-Management-in-South-Asia.pdf>) February 2017.
5. Khalid Shah and Kriti M Shah, "Kashmir after Article 370: India's Diplomatic Challenge," ORF (Observer Research Paper, October 19, 2020), <https://www.orfonline.org/research/kashmir-after-article-370/>.
6. Holger Wenning, "Kashmir: A Regional Conflict with Global Impact", NZJPIL 2003, (<https://www.wgtn.ac.nz/public-law/publications/nz-journal-of-public-and-international-law/previous-issues/volume-1-issue-1-november-2003/wenning.pdf>) 212.

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and other world leaders paid heed to this issue, because now if minor clashes between both deteriorate, it would just be a push button nuclear war, and started urging both antagonists to reach bilateral agreed settlements⁷.

During the new nuclear age (1998-2006), the two countries' leaders visited each other and forged a relationship of unparalleled depth. However, the 2008 Mumbai bombings (which India blamed on Pakistan) put a stop to any prospect of peace talks or rapprochement between the two countries. Pakistan's reputation took a severe hit as a result of India's growing clout on international stages being seen as more credible than Pakistan's. India's diplomatic shrewdness was on full display when the assassination of Burhan Wani, a Kashmiri, sparked unprecedented unrest in the valley; yet, not even Muslim nations commented on the issue or backed Pakistan.

For example, in 2019, the Indian prime minister unilaterally revoked article 370 and 35A, ended the Valley's autonomy, deployed millions of soldiers, imprisoned hundreds of Kashmiri leaders, imposed a curfew, restricted access to the Valley (especially for media reporters), jammed internet and other information exchange means, etc., and the global community paid no attention.

7. Khalid Shah and Kriti M Shah, "Kashmir after Article 370: India's Diplomatic Challenge," ORF (Observer Research Paper, October 19, 2020), <https://www.orfonline.org/research/kashmir-after-article-370/>.

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GEOPOLITICAL IMPORTANCE OF KASHMIR

Kashmir is undeniably a significant source of contention between two of south Asia's most arch rivals. Both India and Pakistan have succeeded in creating nuclear weapons as a result of their active participation in a continuing arms race that has been going on between the two countries ever since they gained their independence. In spite of the fact that fighting is an archaic method of resolving conflicts, a war seems to be unavoidable in the case of Kashmir. In reality, India and Pakistan have already fought three times over the same problem, but they have been hesitant to fight since the introduction of nuclear weapons into their arsenals.

The struggle is still ongoing, and war is a distinct possibility for both countries involved. This has caused unease among members of the international community, should the fighting get more intense, it will definitely be a nuclear war⁸. Because of its location as a transit point between Europe and Asia and because of its proximity to Afghanistan, the region of Kashmir is of great geopolitical significance and stature among its neighbouring governments and in the international world. Currently, Pakistan stands in the way of India's plans to establish a land bridge to Central Asia. China's interest in Pakistani-administered Kashmir stems from its desire for a land route to the Arabian Sea and the Indian

8. Foizee, Bahauddin . "Kashmir's Geopolitical Significance Is Growing by the Day | Geopolitical Monitor." Geopolitical Monitor, May 24, 2018. <https://www.geopoliticalmonitor.com/kashmirs-geopolitical-significance-is-growing-by-the-day/>.

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Ocean, both of which are located far away from the country's interior. A land route leading to central Asia and ultimately Europe is also a consideration for Pakistan⁹.

RECENT KASHMIR FIASCO

The situation in Kashmir has been unstable since the region was illegally annexed by India in 1947. Despite the fact that India and Pakistan have fought three major wars over Kashmir over the years, it's probably safe to say that neither country is particularly interested in governing the entire territory for its own purposes. Rather, their desire to govern and control the region uninterrupted has driven them to provoke conflicts. There hasn't been a major conflict between the two countries since 1998, when they both carried out nuclear bombs, but minor border confrontations occur often and are difficult to prevent.

For the people of Kashmir, the 5th of August, 2019, will go down as a day of tragedy. The Indian BJP government's controversial ruling to abrogate the special status of the valley, maintained and safeguarded by Article 370 and 35A, by a presidential decree, not only sparked a massive influx of turmoil between valley locals but also caused instability along the control line. This also elicited an extraordinary backlash from around the world, especially in light of the restrictions imposed on the region as a result of the ruling. It has been reported that India sent hundreds of troops to the area in preparation for the predicted mass

9. *ibid*

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uprising. Protests were held in every valley town against the unconstitutional repeal of Articles 370 and 35A. The Indian military has imposed the longest curfew in Kashmir's tumultuous history in an effort to quell the demonstrators. Every inch of the valley is now a massive jail.

India has been instructed by the United Nations to return to normality in Kashmir after Pakistan wisely decided to refer the problem to the organization for settlement. The valley has been effectively turned into a jail by the populist Modi government, which is fixated on using force to quell the uprising. This is justified, in part, by the need to prevent radicalization and terrorism. The rest of the world is saddened by what has happened.

In addition to imposing a harsh curfew on the people of Kashmir, India has ignored the rights of millions of locals there and done nothing to improve their living conditions.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN KASHMIR ISSUE

After the repeal of Articles 35A and 370, India unleashed a new wave of atrocities, including a two-month internet blackout that was the longest in recorded history and a months-long curfew that deprived the people of Jammu and Kashmir of their freedom of movement and, with hundreds of thousands of troops stationed in the valley, prevented them from holding the mass protests and rallies they had been planning.

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New developments, including the fact that both India and Pakistan are now nuclear powers, have caused the world community to worry about the escalation of tensions and the potential for a nuclear war.

The Indian government has utilized several repressive measures in Kashmir to silence the voices of its citizens. Kashmiri leaders, freedom fighters, and other significant persons who might channel popular fury into long-term resistance were detained, and hundreds of soldiers were sent to the region. Many prominent politicians were released from jail, but hundreds of Kashmiris are said to still be detained in prisons around the nation and in Kashmir.

One of the main difficulties we (India) faced was preventing a violent uprising in the region. A former Indian official who actively lobbied the US for help remarked,

“If there were deaths, we would have ended up losing regional and global backing.”

“We were fortunate in that our containment attempts were effective.”

The world community was calmed as a result of India's refusal to allow protests that had the potential to turn violent, which would have made it even more challenging for India to keep the backing of the West¹⁰.

10. Vohra, Anchal. “Modi Took Control of Kashmir 2 Years Ago—and Got Away With It.” Foreign Policy, August 3, 2021. <https://foreignpolicy.com/2021/08/03/modi-took-control-of-kashmir-2-years-ago-and-got-away-with-it/>.

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India has also threatened to terminate large commercial relationships with the last two protesters, Turkey and Malaysia, who have openly condemned India on the subject of Kashmir, and utilized its economic strength as a counterbalance to China. Both Turkey and Malaysia have been vocal in their criticism of India over the dispute over Kashmir.

India was able to prevent massive uprisings among the frustrated, scared, and leaderless Kashmiris. One of the famous politicians who was imprisoned in the Centaur Hotel in Srinagar for seven months, a magnificent property that acted as a temporary jail for Kashmir's political elite, claimed,

“Due to the government's harsh treatment, we no longer want special status, a political settlement, or a referendum, but rather independence.”¹¹

The Indian government promised the people of Kashmir that if the special status was revoked, they would at long last see development, resources, and job possibilities. Is there any proof that the typical Kashmiri's quality of life has improved in the intervening two years? The major member of the National Conference Political Party of Kashmir, Tanvir Sadiq, disagreed with the statement.

Fahad Shah was apprehended by Indian authorities on March 14, 2022, for allegedly breaking an extra-judicial section of the Public Safety Act. The Kashmir Walla, which Fahad Shah edits, is a prominent multimedia news organization.

11. Ibid

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Under this fictitious law, the government may detain someone for up to two years without filing formal charges. He was arrested by Indian officials on February 4 for what they deemed to be "anti-national" Facebook posts, although he was not initially charged under this law.¹².

Even though the international world did not back Pakistan's position on Kashmir, Pakistan's former prime minister fought for the rights of the innocent Kashmiris, who had suffered bloodshed, human rights abuses, and other horrors for over seven decades. He made a bold assertion, which earned him praise:

“It is up to the world whether it joins us or not, Pakistan is and will always be willing to go to whatever extent and its people will always support Kashmir’s people until the very end.”

When Imran Khan, the former prime minister of Pakistan, was invited on a German show to condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, he instead brought up the issue of Kashmir and said that the international community's "**baiting an eye**" from it had emboldened the Indian government to take "**extreme actions**" in the Kashmir valley without being challenged.

12. Wani, Maknoon, Alok Pokharel, Kesang Thakur and Anu Sabhlok, Anupam Debashis Roy, and Shaukat Korai. "New Developments in 'New Kashmir' - Himal Southasian." Himal Southasian, April 1, 2022. <https://www.himalmag.com/himal-briefs-new-developments-in-new-kashmir-2022/>.

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“What about Kashmir... India has hijacked the rights of Kashmiris... Kashmir is a disputed area between Pakistan and India,” ‘I'd want to start with Kashmir... this is a subject that affects us and is important to us... what about other people who aren't concerned about our human rights?’¹³

Khan had planned to end the Kashmir war and had made some progress toward that goal, but given the long history of the conflict in the region, the focus that the previous administration had given to the Kashmir problem, particularly in international forums, was unprecedented.

Shehbaz Sharif, Pakistan's newly appointed prime minister, addressed the Kashmir issue in his first public address. He extended an olive branch to his Indian counterpart, Narendra Modi, asking for his assistance in ending the war. Sharif said that a peaceful resolution to the crisis is "indispensable" and should be “resolved peacefully”.

According to him, the Kashmiri people have made the valley there **"red with their blood."**¹⁴.

Even though "developed New Kashmir," or "Naya Kashmir," was supposed to be the end result of the repeal of Articles 35A and 370, the Modi administration has

13. The Express Tribune. “Imran Praised for Highlighting Kashmir Issue in DW Interview | The Express Tribune,” July 3, 2022. <https://tribune.com.pk/story/2364545/imran-praised-for-highlighting-kashmir-issue-in-dw-interview>.
14. Connah, Leoni. “Kashmir: What Happens after Imran Khan’s Downfall?” The Conversation, April 21, 2022. <https://theconversation.com/kashmir-what-happens-after-imran-khans-downfall-181385>.

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deliberately prevented a fair election from being held in the valley, and unrest and demonstrations have only grown since then.

Anger among Kashmiris has grown, and fighting between Indian forces and terrorists in that area is becoming a hindrance to the Indian government's malicious and self-serving goals. The administration's response was ill-advised, making matters worse in Kashmir by imprisoning journalists and banning political activity among government employees.¹⁵

The Modi government is now attempting to control the flow of news about recent events in Kashmir. The armed seizure of the Kashmir Press Club was one tactic used to achieve this goal. Additionally, locals have complained to authorities for the removal or limiting of internet access to Kashmiri news archives.

Recent events show that the Indian government is actively trying to limit research and media coverage of the ongoing persecution in Kashmir. India's goal is to keep full control over Kashmir while making it seem politically active and stable. Living under constant fear and distrust, as most people in Kashmir do, is normal. If Kashmir loses its unique status, locals are concerned about a long-term shift in population. Since India and Pakistan gained their independence, the valley's inhabitants have had special rights to property. Indian army have built bunkers and sent soldiers to hold the disputed territory in an effort to counter the so-called

15. Wani, Maknoon, Alok Pokharel, Kesang Thakur and Anu Sabhlok, Anupam Debashis Roy, and Shaukat Korai. "New Developments in 'New Kashmir' - Himal Southasian." Himal Southasian, April 1, 2022. <https://www.himalmag.com/himal-briefs-new-developments-in-new-kashmir-2022/>.

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insurgency. Because of rebel attacks, holding elections, fair or not, will be impossible.¹⁶

PAKISTAN'S STANCE ON KASHMIR ISSUE

It's undeniable that Pakistan is a weaker state than India is in terms of the economy, foreign relations, and territory, and the gap between the two countries' strategic capabilities only widens with time. In any case, Pakistan has never had any trouble doing this while advocating for Kashmir on global stages. Pakistan really went in a different direction than it is going in today, one that is more diplomatic and not hostile. It is easy for other countries to see that the strategic and economic gulf between the two hostile powers is widening by the day, and therefore easy for other countries to choose a side. Despite the fact that this has prevented Pakistan from achieving its goals, the country maintains its position that Kashmir is an integral part of Pakistan.

Zahid Hafeez, Foreign Ministry spokesperson told the head of Kashmir committee;

"Our position is anchored on the UN resolutions on Jammu and Kashmir dispute"¹⁷

16. Ibid

17. Latif, Aamir. "Pakistan Says No Change in Stance on Kashmir." Pakistan says no change in stance on Kashmir, March 2022. <https://www.aa.com.tr/en/asia-pacific/pakistan-says-no-change-in-stance-on-kashmir/2194440> .

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Furthermore, he mentioned;

“There has been no shift in Pakistan's position on tackling the Kashmir dispute through dialogue and in accordance with relevant UN resolutions”¹⁸

Pakistan in recent years has raised the issue and the Foreign Office of Pakistan has launched few awareness campaigns on national and international level regarding Kashmir issue in order to direct limelight on ongoing Human rights violations in Indian occupied Kashmir¹⁹. Pakistan affirms on national and international platforms every opportunity it gets that India's hold over Muslim majority Kashmir is entirely unethical, immoral and unconstitutional and strongly condemns her endeavors to obtain international support of the geographical status quo²⁰. Pakistan has very enthusiastically has outspread a chronicle that Kashmir belongs to Pakistan and Pakistan stands with Kashmir and its people no matter the circumstances. Pakistan always condemns the horrific actions of India in Indian Occupied Kashmir against Muslims of Kashmir.

18. Ibid

19. Shabbir, Saima . “Pakistan Launches International Campaign Highlighting Kashmir Issue – Foreign Office | Arab News PK.” Arab News PK, January 30, 2020. <https://arab.news/5fyn6> .

20. Kashmir: The View from Islamabad | Crisis Group. “Kashmir: The View From Islamabad | Crisis Group,” December 4, 2003. <https://www.crisisgroup.org/asia/south-asia/kashmir/kashmir-view-islamabad> .

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CONFLICT RESOLUTION WITH REGARDS TO KASHMIR ISSUE

The path to justice and peace in Jammu and Kashmir is fraught with ambiguities, nuances, and politics since the situation is so convoluted. All possible paths to peace in the Jammu and Kashmir valley may be blocked, leaving the people of Kashmir at the mercy of the Indian Government, if the basic principles of fair play are ignored and not done well. India exploits the imbalance of the conflict in Kashmir by using that fact to its advantage. Kashmiris are realistic about their relative powerlessness in the face of India and take steps to improve the situation, but their efforts have so far been fruitless. Also, there is a major imbalance in the power structure between India and Pakistan, with India getting a pass and being the beloved child of the world community, notably the United States, compared to Pakistan.²¹

India has nothing to gain by withdrawing from this conflict at the present moment. The Indian interest is substantially benefited by keeping Kashmir safe. Given the abundance of both hydroelectric power and natural materials, this is a distinct possibility. Most Indians would be against handing up Kashmir, despite increased support for India's nationalist and anti-Pakistan reasons. It's likely that the Modi nationalist administration's image as tough negotiators who won't budge on issues of foreign policy played a major influence in their victory. Many people think Modi's resounding victory in the second election was helped along by his

21. Asoori, Pranav. "A Look into the Conflict Between India and Pakistan over Kashmir." E-International Relations, October 7, 2020. <https://www.e-ir.info/2020/10/07/a-look-into-the-conflict-between-india-and-pakistan-over-kashmir/>.

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swift and decisive action against the alleged terrorist camps in Pakistan. The Kashmir dispute has not significantly affected India's economy or politics, and it has not resulted in a substantial number of civilian fatalities, either. Because of the current condition of circumstances, it is quite unlikely that India would change its stance on Kashmir anytime soon. However, it seems that India is moving toward fully absorbing Kashmir into its borders.²²

There is little chance of a U-turn on Pakistan's part, either. Pakistan places a high strategic value on Kashmir. If we want to have good ties with China, this must happen. Kashmir is home to several large rivers, making the area crucial to Pakistan's agricultural sector. Despite receiving a lot of attention from across the world, Pakistan has only been exposed to modest pressure. Despite its inferior military, Pakistan is also a nuclear power. If hostilities were to break out, every member of both sides would be killed. Although tensions between China and India have been building for some time, China continues to be an ally of India nevertheless. Therefore, the likelihood of an Indian invasion is low. The loss of Kashmir would be devastating to Pakistan's already weakening economy.²³

India and Pakistan both have printed their versions of maps with India being part of both nations respectively. Kashmir was to be the part of Pakistan at the time of independence, so Pakistan still considers it as its integral part and believes to have a rightful claim over Kashmir. On the contrary, As the Maharaja of Kashmir

22. Ibid

23. Ibid

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signed an instrument of accession with India not matter the circumstances, India also believes to have a rightful claim over Kashmir.

Although a referendum seems improbable, but with international mediation, it can take place. To expect a fair plebiscite to be accomplished with any degree of ease would be unreasonable. It also seemed that emotions among Kashmiris had shifted, because India has for decades, subjugated innocents Kashmiris to violence and atrocities, Kashmiris who were pro-Indian at the time of independence or even after that have changed their stance.

To establish peace, it is necessary to find a peaceful conclusion to the conflict in Kashmir. Despite the fact that a peaceful end to the crisis in Kashmir seems idealistic and unattainable. The destructive nature and harmful repercussions of conflict, however, might be mitigated by adhering to conflict management as a process. Considering this, it's clear that improved communication and connection patterns across all political regimes or concerned parties are essential for conflict resolution to succeed. The first is the proactive strategy, while the second is the reactive method.

Good governance, creating trust and confidence, communicating effectively, and working together with other parties are all elements of a proactive strategy. It seems challenging, but not impossible, to accomplish all of the aforementioned in Kashmir. Nothing can prevent the Jammu and Kashmir valley from finding peace after decades of sacrifice and bloodshed if both countries come forward to

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negotiate and talk about the settlement of the problem bilaterally, and think about the Kashmiris rather than their own interests, and strive toward permanent peace by implementing trust building measures and effective communication. Despite the fact that progress toward good governance, improved interactions and communications, and confidence building measures has stalled over the last seven decades, people continue to hold out hope.

Since both countries have their own ambitions and seek Kashmir for themselves, it is difficult to take a proactive approach to achieving peace and settlement in the region of Kashmir. In the Kashmir conflict, a reactive approach that includes mediation, negotiation, conciliation, arbitration, crisis management, etc., would seem biased due to the fact that India is the United States' ally in South Asia and the United States seeks for India to challenge China's dominance in South Asia, while relations between Pakistan and the United States are either stagnant or worse than before. The United States will support India's claim to Kashmir, and other major European countries will likely follow suit. This will weaken Pakistan's standing. To prevent all of that, the United States must put her interests aside and strive sincerely for the enhancement of the ties of both countries, India and Pakistan. To achieve peace, this would be helpful. There is a real need for effective and impartial mediation since the US already refers to the Kashmir problem as a nuclear flashpoint between both states. The impartial party should make sure that all sides benefit from the negotiating process to end the Kashmir conflict. If the dispute were to erupt and intensify, it would be a nuclear war,

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which would be enormously catastrophic not just economically but also in terms of the human cost, thus countries having resolutely power should work fervently towards conciliation and crisis management.

ANALYSIS

The squabble between India and Pakistan may be settled with a simple, fair referendum monitored by the United Nations. However, India's ravenous quest for dominance has always been a barrier to the valley's achieving the serenity its inhabitants want. The current and previous governments of India have never approved of this option, and they certainly won't let it prevail, whether the supporters are secularists or religious fundamentalists. For over seventy years, Kashmiris have been subjected to a wide range of atrocities, the worst of which is India's ongoing intentional and unrelenting demographic engineering, which has emboldened the unjust and extremist Modi administration to take any action without being questioned by international community, as India is favorite child of the US in South Asian region.²⁴ Given that the Indian government has already begun its cunning strategy to flood the valley with Hindus, it is not entirely erroneous to believe that it will simply choose a referendum.

Because India can easily influence the results of a referendum to get the results it wants, a population shift would be to its benefit. The results will enhance India's

24. Malik, & Akhter. (2021, June 30). View of explaining jammu and kashmir conflict under indian illegal occupation: past and present. Retrieved October 28, 2022, from <https://margallapapers.ndu.edu.pk/site/article/view/48/29>

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unlawful claim to the Kashmir valley, dashing the dreams of millions for a negotiated settlement with Pakistan or the establishment of an independent state.²⁵

There is already a de facto boundary designated between Indian Occupied Pakistan and Azad Kashmir, and it is called as the Line of Control (LoC), hence the present and unsatisfactory status quo will continue even if many identical ways have been advocated since the commencement of this problem. The Indian government's control over the Kashmir valley becomes tighter every day, leaving innocent Kashmiris to bear the brunt of its power grab. Meanwhile, the world community and self-proclaimed peace advocates turn a blind eye to the daily atrocities in which Indian officials raping, killing, detaining, and punishing anybody they like.

Unlike the other princely states that India at the time of independence forcibly acceded, Jammu and Kashmir has a Muslim majority and was intended to be a part of Pakistan; this has traumatized yet incensed the Kashmiri generations, and the young Kashmiris are incredibly dedicated and self-assured in their quest for liberty and emancipation from the awful Indian expatriate regime.

In an effort to modify the demographic makeup of Jammu and Kashmir, the BJP and the Hindu nationalist ethos are unwavering in their dedication to neutralize the state's unique status and distinctiveness by measures such as attempting to construct communities in the Valley for non-residents and Kashmiri Hindu pundits who were expelled from the Valley during the 1990 war. One may expect

25. Ibid

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further turmoil and carnage in J&K with repercussions for the region and the world if one holds such an attitude that the Valley of Kashmir must be inhumanely included into the Indian Union.

The international world has never held India accountable for its human rights abuses. There has never been any attempt at negotiation or engagement on the Kashmir issue on the part of India. Since the partition of the subcontinent, Kashmir has been the site of three wars between the two countries. Pakistan and Kashmiris are in favor of a free and fair election in the territory that is still under occupation, but India has continually behaved unjustly and with hesitation.

As things are, there is nothing to convince India to change its position on Kashmir. Since a yes vote in a referendum is no guarantee of victory, they would have no incentive to seek one. India has been determined that the world community keeps aside from the problem.

Kashmir Issue, regrettably, appears to be stuck in one spot for many decades now, and recent confrontations involving the two adversaries, India and Pakistan, have further aggravated the situation. It is simply unrealistic to think that diplomatic relationships would improve in the future, since India's cynicism will prevent her from having prosperous bilateral relations with Pakistan and the fact that the people of India-occupied Kashmir would rather be a part of Pakistan than India will prevent India from engaging in diplomatic relations with Pakistan, particularly to address the problem of Kashmir.

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If the BJP's strategy to change India's population proves successful, the party will hold the referendum without hesitating. If the outcome goes the BJP's way, India's negotiating position with Pakistan will be significantly strengthened. BJP has already begun the strategy with its increased presence in Jammu and Kashmir to destroy its regional political opponents. The only goal is to get more support from voters in their own country than the opposition does via a network of domestic political influencers that you've carefully cultivated. To be sure, the BJP is well on its way to victory in the Kashmir valley, where it is building the groundwork for a foxlike strategy that will allow it to outfox its rivals.

The current political environment makes it difficult to resolve the Kashmir problem via the UN Security Council's planned impartial referendum or international dialogue, and this is especially true in light of Indian intransigence.

CONCLUSION

For nearly seven decades, India has brutally ruled the Kashmir valley, repressing any resistance via torture and bloody crackdowns. India has taken advantage of every opportunity despite the fact that doing so would violate the moral codes and international rules that have helped the country in the past. Wani, along with many other young Kashmiris who were killed, is looked up to as an example of what it means to be a fighter by today's generation of Kashmiri youth, who refuse to cower in the face of pellet gun attacks. Anti-imperialist chants include "Azadi," "let's advance to Muzaffarabad," and "hoist the Pakistan flag." Women and

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children chant songs of Azadi (emancipation and liberation) and heroism as they gather around coffins shrouded in the Pakistani flag to symbolize their disapproval of India in Indian-occupied Kashmir, where funerals for resistance members are occasions for celebration. In spite of India's shrewd government spending vast sums of money on anti-Pakistani campaigns and public relations initiatives over a long period of time, negative public perception of India persists. For the simple reason that India can deceive the international community, but the people who have been oppressed and tortured for generations can't be manipulated.

The inability of Pakistan to adequately raise the Kashmir problem in international fora is a major roadblock to peace in the region. The lack of effective networking in Pakistan is mostly attributable to India, whose increasingly powerful lobbying has made it more difficult for the international world to support Pakistan's stand on the Kashmir conflict. Pakistani demonstrations, conferences, and speeches won't accomplish anything until the permanent and non-permanent members of the United Nations Security Council, who may provide advice during Kashmir peace discussions, are convinced.²⁶

Pakistan, like India, should adapt to new tactics to obtain the desired end in today's times, when everything is a click away and the theaters of conflict have

26. Mustafa, Ghulam & Imran, Muhammad & Nawaz, Adnan. (2019). the Indo-Pak Rivalry and the Kashmir Issue: A Historical Analysis in the Security Context of the South Asia. 84.https://www.researchgate.net/publication/340091708_The_Indo-Pak_Rivalry_and_the_Kashmir_Issue_A_Historical_Analysis_in_the_Security_Context_of_the_South_Asia/citation/download

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moved. Pakistan must deploy strong multilateral diplomacy, implement efficient law enforcement, participate in international debate forums, and keep Kashmiris in the loop. Keeping an eye out for both violent and peaceful responses is crucial in this era of hybrid warfare, as is maintaining a robust economy and authoritative government. It will improve Pakistan's standing in the international community and give it more leverage to find solutions to thorny problems like Siachen, Sir Creek, and even Kashmir. India has illegally seized Gilgit Baltistan and Baluchistan and is undertaking a campaign against the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) as well as waging non-kinetic warfare there. In this context of hybrid warfare, a confident and resolute Pakistan may respond to these threats rationally and intelligently, helping the people of Kashmir in their fight for freedom from Indian domination. Due to the aforementioned difficulties, it's hard to see this really occurring, especially without a very catastrophic impasse. It's likely that both nations will drag out this conflict until they can't avoid resolution any longer. Despite the bleak outlook, hope for positive change remains. Today, the need for the resolution of Kashmir dispute, particularly after the political situation which emerged in the region after the recent conflict between India and Pakistan following the 2025 Pahalgam attack close to Pahalgam in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir, is more crucial than ever.