

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Kashmir Dispute: India VS Pakistan and its Influence on South Asia and Global Power

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Abstract: The conflict over Kashmir between India and Pakistan has a big impact on South Asia's geopolitical dynamics and the larger balance of power in the world. The conflict, which has its roots in the 1947 division of British India, has intensified into a recurring issue involving national identities, religious affiliations, and territorial claims. The Line of Control (LoC) acts as a de facto border between the two countries, which have fought several wars and ongoing military conflicts. The conflict in Kashmir has had a significant impact on regional stability by encouraging militarization and impeding South Asia's economic integration. Additionally, it has exacerbated insurgency, sectarianism, and transnational terrorism, making peace initiatives even more challenging. The participation of superpowers like China, Russia, and the United States adds another as these countries pursue their strategic interests in the area, adding yet another level of complexity. A resolution is still elusive in spite of multiple diplomatic interventions and international mediation efforts. This protracted conflict highlights how regional conflicts and global power politics interact, underscoring the necessity of ongoing communication, fostering trust, and upholding human rights in order to bring about sustainable peace.

Keywords: Kashmir Dispute, India, Pakistan, South Asia, Global Power

Introduction

The Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan is one of the long-standing and complicated issues that poses a potential threat to the South Asian region as well as to the global society. As a result of the division of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, the issue over this geographically and militarily important territory has remained a chronic center of a rivalry between the two countries – both of which possess nuclear weapons capabilities. However, the issue of Kashmir is not regional as it also involves the global superpowers and sets the international relations and policies of South Asia (Conflict Between India and Pakistan, [2024](#)).

The root cause of the "Kashmir problem" can be traced to the India-Pakistan partition that resulted in two separate countries, namely India and Pakistan. Muslim-majority of the state of Jammu and Kashmir under Hindu ruler was making a sensitive issue out of it. The ruler's decision to accede to India led to the first Indo-Pak war in 1947-1948, which was followed by a UN-negotiated ceasefire and, thereafter, the emergence of LoC- Line of Control, that has divided the Kashmir into the so-called Indian-administered Kashmir and Pakistan administered Kashmir. The two countries fought a war in 1965 and then in 1971, and also continued with various smaller battles and diplomatic struggles. Both lay full claim to the region, but neither controls it completely.

The impact of the Kashmir conflict has been wholesomely political and economic, as well as the security of South Asia and the two regions. It has promoted an enduring arms race and military buildup within the zone, crowding needs and draining focus on growth. It has also damaged the prospects of regional developmental cooperation and integration, especially under the SAARC agenda. Furthermore, the conflict not only deepens the fit between sectarian and ethnic divisions but also creates an environment conducive

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to the growth of extremism as well as insurgency. Kashmir continues to be the defining principle of the relationship, as both the foreign and domestic policies of the two countries reflect this. Kashmir, for India, is an issue of national unity and composite nationality; for Pakistan, it is a question of its very existence and its commitment to the cause of Muslims. This dispute has churned out repeated military skirmishes, cross-border terrorism, and human rights abuses, thus cementing the hatred and suspicion. Negotiations aimed at ending the conflict have been tried several times and have not succeeded because of purely historical causes, political conditions, and differences in the interests of states.

The issue of Kashmir has become the focal point of superpowers such as the United States of America, China, and Russia, all of whom have a stake in this part of the world. The US, being a key assistant to Pakistan in the past, has shown less affinity in recent years, partnering with India against China's dominance in the Indian Ocean region. China also has territorial claims over some parts of Ladakh, and its deep-rooted relations with Pakistan also play a big role in its involvement in the Kashmir conflict. The contentious China-Pakistan Economic Corridor or CPEC, which is, in turn, part of Beijing's Belt and Road strategy, sees its route in the territory controlled by Pakistan. Although operating in the framework of traditional cooperation with India, Russia has also attempted to involve Pakistan in an examination to challenge America's influence (Kuszevska, [2022](#)).

Historical Background

The 1947 division of British India is the origin of the long-running territorial dispute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir. When the ruler of the Muslim-majority princely state of Jammu and Kashmir decided to join India, it became a flashpoint. The first Indo-Pak war broke out in 1947–1948 as a result of this decision, and a ceasefire mediated by the UN established the Line of Control (LoC). The region's instability is further highlighted by ongoing skirmishes and subsequent wars in 1965, 1971, and 1999.

Beyond its local dynamics, Kashmir has an impact on the political and security landscape of South Asia. In particular, under the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), the conflict has hindered regional cooperation and fueled an arms race. Additionally, it has gotten worse, with sectarian divisions, and served as a breeding ground for insurgency and extremism. Major nations with strategic interests, including the US, China, and Russia, have taken notice of the Kashmir dispute on a global scale. In order to offset China's influence, the United States has alternated between backing Pakistan during the Cold War and siding with India more recently. China sees the conflict through the prism of its larger regional aspirations, such as the Belt and Road Initiative, given its territorial interests in the area and strategic alliance with Pakistan. Russia, which has traditionally backed India, has attempted to take a more balanced stance by talking to Pakistan about common security issues. The Kashmir dispute is still unresolved despite multiple attempts at settlement, including United Nations interventions, because of deeply ingrained geopolitical stakes (Raazia, [2021](#)).

Global Conflict Resolution and Humanitarian Bodies

Most of the attempts by international organizations and third-party states to solve the Kashmir conflict have not been fruitful to a large extent. After the first Indo-Pak war, the United Nations played its part by observing the cease-line traced through the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP). Nonetheless, these efforts took place, but the main problem is still unsolved, especially the UN plan to hold a plebiscite to decide the fate of the area, which was never held because of extreme regional politics and characteristic mistrust between the parties involved.

The human rights situation in Kashmir has made external interference even more difficult. Hearings and complaints of human rights injustices, limitations on freedom, and refugees have received attention internationally, which has placed a veil over the governance of this area. Because of these problems, demands

for increased responsibility and more aid have been made, but the grim political and regional precedents often cloud the humanitarian motives. The interference of significant world powers makes their management of the status quo in South Asia self-serving and watered down. Clearly, the United States, China, and Russia will not unify their approach and interest towards a neutral Forums. These bilateral and strategic partnership roles with India and Pakistan always tend to play the politically strategic interests of counter-terrorism, regional power, and the economic aspects with little or no regard for humanitarian or human rights account in great conflict (TINO, [2024](#)).

Moreover, the UN cannot implement the resolutions because of the principle of non-interference between one state and another state and the unwillingness of both India and Pakistan to resort to international arbitration. Both countries consider the question of territories in the region at stake, and thus, neither state wishes to accept pressure and attempts of intermediation from the third party in this matter. Thus, despite several efforts by third-party states and international organizations, the conflict prevailing situation in the Kashmir region remains unresolved due to unalterable geopolitical stakes involved and further complicated human rights and the question of sovereignty. This is because the issues at the heart of the conflict relate not only to the overt political actions of the regional and global powers of the time but also to the lives and communities involved in a global society that is often unforgiving of refugees and migrants (Nawaz, [2018](#)).

Research Questions

- ▶ In what way does the Kashmir dispute between India and Pakistan impact the South Asian security environment with respect to the militarization of South Asia and the stability of the region?
- ▶ Expanding into local geopolitics, what role do global powers play in the Kashmir dispute, and how do their festering influences impact the wider territory of South Asia?

Theoretical Lens: International Relations Realism

The core conflict in South Asia is the Kashmir issue, which has been a festering sore between two nuclear-armed states with a power differential between India and Pakistan and has definitely impacted international actors. The best theoretical model that would help explain this conflict is Realism, where the core focuses on power, national interest, and the structure of international relations.

Realism and the Kashmir Dispute

Realism presupposes an international structure in which states act independently and have to depend on themselves to thrive. Hobbesian theory emphasizes the use of powers – warfare powers as well as economic powers in defining the character of states and the results of international conflicts. Indeed, it could be argued that the dispute over Kashmir epitomizes the Realist paradigm. The Kenyan situation reveals the type of power struggle fueled by national interest that is ravaging the world, from Tunis to Wall Street, to London, to Madrid, to Cairo, and to Main Street.

In Realism's view, the conflict is best framed as a clash between two nation-states, India and Pakistan, and for each of them, the primary goal is the pursuit of interests. To India, control of the region is of great importance to its territorial integrity and national integration with reference to Jammu and Kashmir. Kashmir is also a claim of Pakistani sovereignty and a way to challenge the overwhelming Might of the dominant regional power, India. Kashmir has demographic, geographic, and other resources beneficial for any power, and therefore, this power fight is ingrained. Both countries have aggressively equipped themselves to gain control over the sought-after territory and have had dozens of exaggerated combating episodes near the Line of Control (LoC) (Bajoria, [2009](#)).

Security Dilemma

This hypothesis will explain how the Realist security dilemma is apropos to the Kashmir conflict. India views Pakistan as a security threat and vice versa. There is an arms race, military buildup, and danger that either side might use weapons of mass destruction. This mutual suspicion has put into force the nuclearization of South Asia as both countries possess and sustain nuclear weapons to counter each other.

The two nations do not trust each other and have inefficient communication structures, which fuels the security dilemma. Diplomacy and conflict-solving processes have been alarmed and sometimes brought to a halt by acts of terrorism, rebellions, and corresponding aggressive military activities.

Influence on South Asia

The dispute over this region is a dangerous factor in the stability and security of the South Asian region. The continuing conflict has increased militarization in the region, and ever more funds are allocated not for socio-economic improvement but for military aims. Militarization has also served as a cause of regional instability because India and Pakistan's competition poses effects on other components of the region. The conflict has deterred the development and integration of cooperation in the regions, especially where regional cooperation is lacking, such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC inferences). Due to hostile relations between India and Pakistan, the countries of South Asia have not been able to effectively address relevant topics such as trade, environment or fight against terrorism (Wang, [2022](#)).

Global Power Dynamics

Realism can also explain how global powers have waded into the conflict around the territory of Kashmir. United States, China, and Russia have a vested interest in South Asia, and this brings these powers into the conflict in the region.

United States

To a large extent, the US policy toward each aspect of the conflict has been influenced by its preferred strategic interest in the region. During the Cold War period, the United States of America supported Pakistan as the counter to communism in South Asia. After 9/11, the U.S. had developed mixed feelings with both India and Pakistan since, on one hand, it aimed at achieving its counterterrorism goals while on the other, it had a strategic partnership with India. The U.S. has, from time to time, attempted to mediate the conflict with an appeal for the two parties to sit down and negotiate. However, Elevator's prime concern stays averted in preserving stability in the region as a way to shield its data, particularly in fighting in opposition to terrorism and shaping the rise of China.

China

China shares concerns about the continuation and escalation of the conflict in Kashmir primarily because of its bilateral cooperation with Pakistan and its territorial interests in Aksai Chin. The rationale that China has for maintaining the cooperation with Pakistan is the need to maintain a balance of power in South Asia and diversify its interest in what is given in the CPEC. Through its two instances of backing Pakistan in international organizations like the United Nations and by investing in infrastructure in Pakistan, China acts as a staunch Realist in the international arena in order to amass a great amount of influence and power in the region. This role further complicates the conflict because it forms yet another facet of the geopolitical struggle that exists over the issue of Kashmir.

Russia

Russia has been less directly involved in the conflict over Kashmir than other countries, but it has participated

over the years. Before the partition, India and Russia had good relations; Russia sold military products and provided diplomatic support for India. However, in the last decade, Moscow has tried to diversify relations with Islamabad due to the mutual interests in Central Asian security and the fight against extremism. Russia's global realist policy stance is demonstrated by her encouragement of the balance of power in the international system, where players like India and Pakistan can regulate their conflict on their own. This position reflects Russia's overall regional power political objectives for the region, including containing the dominance of a single power in the region.

There is no shortage of intractable conflicts around the globe, but few have been as enduring and endemic to the realist paradigm of international relations as the Kashmir dispute. The anarchy of the international system results in states acting as rational and unitary actors seeking to maximize power and pursue national interest, according to realists. Given the nature of the power politics and military build-up between India and Pakistan, this theoretical lens is more methodologically apt to analyze Kashmir conflict along with the role played by global powers (Khan, [2022](#)).

The Kashmir Dispute and Its Setting: Regional Security in South Asia

Despite various diplomatic moves, one of the oldest and most complicated conflicts in the world exists between India and Pakistan over the territory of Kashmir. It has been a constant militia point of conflict between the two nuclear powers since the British Indian subcontinent split in 1947.

Militarization of South Asia

The Kashmir conflict is not only one of the main causes of the militarization of South Asia but also revealed one of its most important faces. India and Pakistan continue to have large standing armies in the area and build up their facilities to support their positions on the gleam. This has led to fighting in the Line of Control (LoC) – the actual border between the Indian and Pakistani-controlled Kashmir. These constant states of readiness have produced many negative effects on both nations, including resource overhead expenses applied to military defense from instructional funding to healthcare.

Another reality is that the Kashmir dispute has had the effect of nuclearizing South Asia. For the record, India and Pakistan fought many battles in 1947-1948, in 1965, in 1971, and in the Kargil conflict in 1999, and both nuclear countries that have developed and tested nuclear weapons posed a high nuclear risk. Nuclear possession has created a condition of mutual vulnerability with the threat of assured destruction, preventing general wars but enhancing the prospects of accidental wars.

Stability of the Region

The continuous conflicts over Kashmir have created unrest in different areas of the South Asian region. The conflict has resulted in insurgencies and terrorism, and the two nations accused each other of supporting militants. Pakistan has been accused of offering affiliations to the rebels in the Indian-owned part of Kashmir, while India has been called to account for excessive use of force and gross violations of human rights in the said state. Such actions have precipitated continuous violent activities and acts of reprisal, thereby destabilizing the region.

Furthermore, the event of the Kashmir dispute has severely given a blow to regional integration and integration. South Asia continues to suffer from its latent economic prospects because of the mutual animosity that exists in the sphere between India and Pakistan. Due to the bilateral conflict, attempts aimed at the implementation of regional economic projects, including the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), have been halted. Such lack of coordination also harms not only regional economic opportunities but also international issues such as climate change, health crises, and poverty.

Finally, it can be concluded that the K – dispute is one of the main reasons for the militarization of the South Asia region and its increasing instability. It sustains a security dilemma; India and Pakistan continue to invest more in military strategies rather than diplomacy, hence enhancing a risky regional security structure (AHANGER [2019](#)).

India vs. Pakistan: Analyzing the Central Issue of the Kashmir Conflict

The matter of conflict that started in Kashmir originated from post-British India and the two-nation theory that created India and Pakistan in 1947. The politically sensitive question emerged as Jammu and Kashmir is the only state in India where Muslims are in the majority and are ruled by a Hindu Maharaja. The decision of the ruler to accede to India precipitated the First Indo-Pak War, the consequence of which was the emergence of LoC, the de facto border of the region.

Kashmir issue dates back to early Nineteen forty-eight with the partition of the subcontinent from Britain. When British India was partitioned, and India and Pakistan were formed, the status of the princely states was given a choice to join either dominion or not. The last ruler of the kingdom of J&K, Maharaja Hari Singh, at first preferred to stay neutral but finally joined the Indian Union in October of 1947 after the Pathan tribal invasion from Pakistan. This accession led to the first Indo-Pak war from 1947 to 1948, which eventually resulted in a United Nations-sponsored ceasefire and the birth of the Line of Control (LoC) in the region, owned by India and Pakistan (Ladwig, [2009](#)).

Conflicts and Development

The dispute over the territory of Kashmir has led to four wars and continuing hostilities: the 1965 and again the 1971 wars, subsequently the Kargil conflict of 1999, and cease-fire line clashes. They have also opened charges against each other for patronizing insurgency and terrorism in the said region, deepening unrest.

One of the most recent and probably the most crucial event in the debacle on the territory is the abrogation of the article 370 of the Indian constitution in August of 2019. Pakistan was strongly against such an action because it saw it as a way of changing demographics and political balance of the area. These measures led to the overwhelming militia, restricting communication, and turmoil in the valley.

Human Rights Concerns

The conflict has raised questions on human rights issues. There are credible reports of extrajudicial killings, enforced disappearances, torture, and a shrinking space of freedom of speech and association. International human rights groups such as Human Rights Watch, for instance, or Amnesty International have urged both India and Pakistan to be more forthcoming on what they are doing in the region.

Current Dynamics

Of the two, the revocation of the special status of Jammu and Kashmir in August last year has turned the heat on. Pakistan strongly protested this move, reduced its diplomatic relations with India, and temporarily expelled imports of goods. While the Indian government props up this integration as the need for development and security, Pakistan disputes it as an invasion of the people's sovereignty (Malik, [2002](#)).

Influence on South Asia

Military Framework and Issues of Security

The issue of Kashmir has been a significant theatre of conflict and has fueled militarisation in South Asia. India and Pakistan keep large armies in the region. The continuous small-arms fire across the LoC, which has become a common matter, of course, adds to the region's insecurity and instability. The long-drawn

conflict has ensured that militarization continues to prevail in the region, with both India and Pakistan having large formations on their respective side of the LoC. The fact of its militarization leads to the increase in an arms race as well as a threat of nuclear conflict that can have negative consequences for regional and global security. The conflict also helps militancy and terrorism and aggravates the situation in the region.

Economic Implications

The conflict chokes a section of resources into defense spending that is detrimental to the economic growth of the two countries. The absence of regional integration is the main reason for the slow development of trade, investment, and economic integration in South Asia. These ingredients of rivalry have recently affected even the projects that promote regional integration, such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) development, by slowing them down.

Social and Political Impact

This paper's heading signifies how the KASHMIR DISPUTE impacts the social and political structures in South Asia. It creates nationalism and political speech in India and Pakistan, usually to gain votes at home. The conflict also affects millions of people across the region and subjects them to displacement, loss of source of income, and psychological stress.

Human Rights and Insurgency

That is, there is ample evidence that human rights and insurgency are abused in the Kashmir territory attracting international outcry. Concerns of Indian security and Global research about the support to the insurgent groups from Pakistan add fuel to the fire. Ying, perpetuate violence against the civilian population, and enhance regional insecurity (Bajoria, [2009](#)).

Role of Global Powers

The superpowers have a very important role in South Asia as far as the nature and consequences of the Kashmir conflict are concerned.

United States

The United States has always occupied a fairly ambiguous position in the conflict in Kashmir, defying the interests of the country. During the Cold War, the U.S. aided Pakistan to counterbalance the Soviet's influence in South Asia. After the 9/11 attacks, the U.S. expected Pakistan's support during the War on Terror and simultaneously built a strategic alliance with India, a growing military, economic, and political power to contain China's growing influence in Asia.

The U.S. has, from time to time, expressed willingness to some extent to mediate the dispute over the territory of Kashmir, though the offer has been rebuked by India that the issue can only be resolved through bilateral negotiation. The U.S. remains vigilant to quite an extent while still at the same time addressing the issues of human rights and escalation (Hassan, [2022](#)).

China

China is, therefore, active in the Kashmir issue in various ways. It has territorial issues with other countries, too; it occupies the Chinese-controlled but Indian-claimed territory of Aksai Chin. The CPEC is part of China's ambitious Belt and Road Initiative scheme that seeks to invest in infrastructure connectivity between China and other countries of the region. China stands with Pakistan in international forums and does not approve of what India is doing in Kashmir, especially dragging the community out of Article 370. This support forms

part of the political configuration that China is offering to prop up its newfound interest in the protection of its strategic interests in the region at the expense of India (Chang, [2017](#)).

Russia

Russia has enjoyed a close bond with India since its early period, and this provided military and diplomatic support. Be that as it may, in the past few years, Russia has also attempted to build closer relations with Pakistan due to CTR and regional security concerns.

Russia has not been an active participant in the conflict and, at best, has been calling for negotiations to spare the region from violence. It is meant to ensure that the region remains strategically secure to guard against those conflicts that may disrupt it (Chietigj, [2024](#)).

UN and the International Society

UN has been seized with the Kashmir issue since times immemorial with the formation of the United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP for brief), which was tasked with the responsibility of monitoring the ceasefire. Although there have been numerous resolutions passed in the UN general assembly demanding a plebiscite as to whether the people of the region wanted to be a part of India or Pakistan, they have been virtually useless because there has been no agreement between the two nations of India and Pakistan.

The European Union and other international actors, as well as human rights organizations from the West, have very tactfully demanded that the parties involved in the conflict sit down at the negotiating table and respect the rights of people in the conflict zone.

The Kashmir issue still constitutes one of the most influential factors defining the security context within the South Asian region. It cuts across social integration, political and economic growth, and cooperation in the region. To have players from across the world entering the conflict complicates the scenario and changes its vector and results. Stabilizing relations not only necessitates consistent diplomacy thrust into the need for dialogue and acts strengthening mutual trust; this must entail respect for the protection and promotion of human rights and democratic norms and practices. The key to understanding this conflict for this particular region is as follows: It is very important to find out how this conflict can be solved in order to have a stable peace in South Asia (The Observer: For Peace In Kashmir, [2015](#)).

Conclusion

The issue of Kashmir, India, and Pakistan is one of the most intractable and significant conflicts that shape the entire South Asian region and predetermines the tendencies in world politics. This territorial rivalry has not only shaped the relations between these two nuclear-armed neighbors but also has a strong impact on the security dynamics of the South Asian region. Thus, the nature of the conflict in Kashmir is grounded in the historical setting and resentment, religious and ethnic differences as well as partition.

Furthermore, the existence of the Kashmir dispute has offered the growth of insurgencies and terrorism, where both countries have blamed each other for supporting radical factions. The violence and resulting human rights abuses have left the region insecure and also drawn global attention and condemnation. The conflict has been looked at as a rallying point for the extreme identities, thus making solutions to it very difficult. Superpowers have come up with influential roles in the controversy of the issue of Kashmir, all motivated by their self-serving concerns toward South Asia. A dozen powers have acted as players in the conflict situation, with the United States, China, and Russia playing diplomatic, economic, and military roles. The entanglement of these global powers has made the issue a further complicating factor in the Kashmir conflict. More often, their self-serving agendas combine with regional animosity and make it

difficult to come up with a consistent and workable solution. Similarly, the strategic rivalry between the US, China, and Russia is present in South Asian-based geopolitics where India and Pakistan use their alliance with them to strengthen themselves. However, political efforts at dialogue and mediation in the Kashmir have not yielded any comprehensive solution to the conflict. There is, therefore, an implication of potential upsurge in the conflict in terms of severity threatening regional and international order as well as stability. This should be an area where the international community can take more active part in the easing of tensions and providing the India and Pakistan with confidence building measures

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