

Kashmir conflict: Yearning for an elusive peace in the contemporary South Asian Region

OSANTHA NAYANAPRIYA THALPAWILA
PH.D., PROFESSOR

ORCID: 0000-0002-5580-7077

Department of Political Science, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka
e-mail: osantha@kln.ac.lk

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Abstract

The conflict in Jammu & Kashmir has become a critical issue not only for India-Pakistan relations but for the whole of South Asia. After careful analysis, the origin of the conflict has been identified by scholars as a failure in demarcating a practical border between India and Pakistan by the British colonial rulers. The consequence was that after gaining independence, both countries went to war three times over Kashmir. In addition, numerous breakouts of hostilities were reported along the line of control between India and Pakistan in the Kashmir region. The United Nations Organization made several attempts to arrive at a permanent solution for the Kashmir issue. In addition, several bilateral meetings were held by India and Pakistan to work out a solution to bring about long-lasting peace in Kashmir. However, all the initiatives failed, and hostilities are still going on. The situation has further deteriorated after several incidents of cross-border terrorism that had its roots in Kashmir politics. Today the Kashmir issue has become a key threat to South Asian security after the changes that have taken place in global politics as well as regional politics. The aim of this paper is to study the conflict in Kashmir to find a way to build peace in the new global context. This paper is based entirely on secondary data and uses the descriptive analysis method. Indian government policy on Jammu & Kashmir has been influenced by past events in Kashmir, while Pakistan is looking for alternative strategies to build peace in Kashmir. The impact of this conflict on the South Asian region will mostly depend on the Indian Government's determination to keep Kashmir under its control while it is continually challenged by the Pakistani regime, which also has claims on this territory.

Introduction

The Kashmir conflict has become the oldest and most significant conflict in South Asia as it has been raging for decades without showing any sign of coming to an end. The conflict has been exacerbated in recent times, with several incidents of terror attacks, counter military invasions, and the disappearance of all goodwill between India and Pakistan. In 2019, many

tensions developed after the Indian Government decided to scrap Arts. 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution, which had granted special status to Jammu & Kashmir state. The constitutional amendment resulted in Jammu & Kashmir losing its position as a “state” in the Indian federal system and being transformed into a union territory. In addition, the amendment brought changes to land ownership rights and gave preferential treatment to the state’s people in providing jobs and education. The changes were made to quell potential unrest among the masses in Jammu & Kashmir caused by the actions of neighboring Pakistan. The immediate reason for New Delhi’s decision was a terrorist attack launched on a convoy of Indian security forces, killing 46 soldiers in Pulwama district in Indian administered Jammu & Kashmir. The incident occurred in February 2019. This terrorist attack proved to be a big setback to the peacebuilding process that was underway between the two countries. However, the violent activities that began in 2019 in Jammu & Kashmir can be identified as being a stepping up of the cross-border terrorism that had been occurring over the previous three decades. India’s and Pakistan’s policies on Kashmir have always been in a state of flux by alternating between bilateral talks and military engagements periodically. The aim of this paper is to examine the continuing attempts at peacebuilding and the contemporary trends in the Kashmir conflict.

The historical dimensions of the conflict: A legacy of the British Raj

Geopolitics play a significant role in South Asian politics because many countries share common borders with India, except Sri Lanka and Maldives, which are islands. Even China shares a part of its south-west border with India. Some complicated border issues remain as important tension-inducing factors in the bilateral relations that India has with many of the neighboring countries. Among those, the disputed border in the Kashmir region that India shares with Pakistan has been a constant source of friction, which has led to several unpleasant experiences for both countries, and in addition posing a threat to the peace and security of the South Asian region. This dispute and the resulting hostilities have been going on ever since both countries gained independence in 1947. Likewise, India and China share a disputed border that separates Arunachal Pradesh and Aksai Chin. This border issue has also created mistrust and resulted in sporadic hostilities since 1947. All these border issues stem from the impractical colonial decisions that were made during the demarcation of boundaries in South Asia (Dasgupta, 2002). Of these border issues, the Kashmir conflict between India and Pakistan has currently emerged as the most serious, badly damaging relations between the two neighbors.

The Kashmir issue has become a decisive factor in defining India-Pakistan relations in the post-colonial period. The conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir commenced in 1947 when the British withdrew from the Indian subcontinent after dividing it into two nation states. Historically, the British policy that guided the division of their most prized colony into India and Pakistan manifested some failures relating to the “princely states” (Das Gupta, 2002). The decision to allow the Hindu Maharajah’s Kingdom in Kashmir to continue as an independent state in the subcontinent was rejected by Pakistan, which claimed that the entire Kashmir

territory was an area that belonged to Pakistan. Pakistan's logic was totally based on its geopolitical relations with Kashmir over a long period of history. The majority population of Kashmir are Muslims and geographically the Princely State of Kashmir had always enjoyed close relations with the territory that is now Pakistan. Therefore, in order to annex the Kashmir territory, a group of tribal invaders from Pakistan attacked Kashmir in October 1947. The Hindu Maharajah of Kashmir then requested military assistance from India to protect his Kingdom and this involved negotiations with the Indian Government. An agreement was reached followed by the signing of an accord between the Maharajah and the Government of India (Grover, 1995). According to that pact, the Kingdom of Kashmir was ceded to India and soon after that Indian military troops landed in Kashmir to protect the territory from tribal attacks (Grover, 1995). That was the first war that occurred between India and Pakistan, and it happened in 1947. India then complained to the UN Security Council that Pakistan was occupying by force some parts of Kashmir even after it had legally become a part of Indian Territory. The UN appointed a special commission to inquire into this matter, which soon proposed a temporary line of control that would divide Kashmir into two parts between India and Pakistan, according to the areas that each country occupied at the end of the war in 1947. In terms of that provisional ruling Jammu & Kashmir belonged to India and Azad Kashmir remained under Pakistani control. The UN decision further called for the holding of a plebiscite to arrive at a more sustainable solution for the Kashmir issue. However, Pakistan totally rejected the treaty signed by the Maharajah of Kashmir and the New Delhi government, annexing Kashmir as part of the Indian territory. Pakistan still views Kashmir as an integral part of its territory, owing to its strategic location and the valley's Islamic identity. On the other hand, the Indian government has never held a plebiscite in Kashmir to date and instead adopted a constitutional process to achieve permanent annexure. In the meantime, it granted a special status to Kashmir as a member state under the Indian federal system. Since then, Kashmir has continued to remain one of the major issues not only between both countries, but also in the South Asian region due to the security ramifications in the current era. The Kashmir dispute has directly intensified the arms race between India and Pakistan, culminating in both becoming nuclear powers in the South Asian region. As is the case, the tension caused by the Kashmir issue has been shaping the foreign policies of India and Pakistan throughout the past 73 years.

Since gaining independence, both countries have been applying various strategies to resolve the conflict and build permanent peace in Kashmir. For instance, Pakistan first believed in a military solution and then welcomed UN involvement to resolve the conflict in the early decades. In addition, the bilateral approach had also been adopted several times over the last 73 years to seek a permanent solution.

All those strategies had been applied from time to time during the cold war period from 1947 to 1990 and then during the post-cold war period from 1990 to date. The military solution had been attempted by Pakistan twice during the cold war period, in 1947 and 1965. The wars in 1947 and 1965 were directly connected to the conflict as Pakistan tried to annex Jammu & Kashmir to its own territory (Barnds, 1972). The third war between India and Pakistan in 1971 was mainly connected to the secession of East Pakistan and the formation of Bangladesh. During

this war too Kashmir was one of the areas where both parties engaged in armed confrontations during their military operations (Bindra, 1981). The fourth India-Pakistan war was reported when a militant group backed by Pakistani troops surreptitiously infiltrated the Indian controlled Kargil mountain area in Kashmir in 1999. Indian forces launched a counterattack to drive them away. However, fewer disturbances were reported during the fourth war than during the earlier ones. Thus, military conflicts could not deliver a final solution for the Kashmir conflict and only served to develop deeper suspicions between both countries.

The United Nations peacebuilding process and the elusive goal

The United Nations (UN) became involved in the Kashmir conflict soon after the war began in 1948 and India made a complaint to the Security Council. The UN involvement in the issue lasted over 23 years (from 1948 to 1971), during which period the UN passed several resolutions that were aimed at mediation and the resolution of the conflict. The UN played a positive role in preventing the escalation of hostilities and in tempering the antagonistic behavior of the two countries, but it did not play a crucial role in its capacity as an international body to reach a permanent solution (Hilali, 1997). Between 1948 and 1971, the UN Security Council passed 23 resolutions on the Kashmir conflict. The UN debate on Kashmir commenced when India lodged a complaint under Art. 35 (Chapter VI) of the UN Charter in the UN Security Council on 1 January 1948, charging Pakistan with “aiding and abetting” the Pakistan-based tribal invasion in Kashmir. In the United Nations, India claimed that the entire territory of Kashmir legally belonged to her by virtue of the treaty of accession signed by the Hindu Maharajah of the Kashmir Kingdom who thus ceded it to the Indian Union (Pir, Shiekh, 2013). The Indian Government’s complaint was considered in the UN Security Council, which then passed its first resolution (Resolution No. 38) on 17 January 1948 calling upon India and Pakistan to observe a ceasefire from the 1 January 1949. Another resolution, No. 39, was passed by the UN on 20 January 1948, calling for the creation of a United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP) to inquire into the dispute and mediate between the two countries. In April 1948, Art. 49 was passed. It focused on the cessation of hostilities and made an important decision to hold a UN monitored plebiscite as a means of arriving at a permanent solution to the dispute. However, both countries agreed, as a temporary measure, to divide the Kashmir Kingdom according to the territories occupied by their respective troops on the battlefield when the ceasefire came into effect in 1949.



Figure 1: Map of Kashmir after dividing in 1949. Source: BBC.com

The two countries accepted the ceasefire plan and allowed the UN to monitor the ceasefire from 1 January 1949. The ceasefire line “went through the western part of Jammu and the eastern part of Poonch, leaving the capital city of Poonch on the Indian side of the line, then crossed the Jhelum River at a point west of Uri and made a large sweep following the valley of the Kishin-ganga River. From there, it proceeded to Kargil, which also remained on the Indian side, and then north-west to the Chinese border. Hunza, Gilgit, Baltistan, Chilas, the greater part of Poonch, and the smaller part of Jammu remained under the control of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir” (Bazaz, 1951, p. 326).

In December 1949, the UN Security Council President, General A.G.L. McNaughton, intervened to mediate between India and Pakistan at the UN, but failed to persuade the parties to come to an agreement. Later, the UN appointed a single representative, Owen Dixon, to mediate the issue, who then held discussions with the representatives of both countries. Owen Dixon submitted his proposal to resolve the dispute. His idea was to hold a plebiscite in Kashmir, which included the following proposals: (1) Holding a plebiscite covering the whole State of Jammu & Kashmir, region by region, and (2) Holding a plebiscite only in regions where the outcome would be “doubtful”. The rest would constitute those regions that were expected to vote for a merger with either India or Pakistan. One “doubtful” region was the valley of Kashmir. However, the responses of both India and Pakistan were not favorable towards the proposal. After Owen Dixon failed to make any headway, the UN appointed Frank Graham as the UN representative to mediate between India and Pakistan to get them to agree on holding a plebiscite in Kashmir. Frank Graham was followed by Gunnar Jarring in 1957, but all the UN representatives failed to make any progress on the Kashmir issue (Lamb, 1992). The UN Security Council then established the UNMOGIP (United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan) to monitor the ceasefire line under Resolution 91, which was passed in 1951.

On the one hand, the UN role in the Kashmir conflict failed repeatedly to find a permanent solution to the conflict. On the other hand, the Indian government adopted a constitutional process to solve the Jammu-Kashmir issue by granting it the status of a state in the Indian Union in the 1950s. In terms of that, the Indian Government ratified Art. 370 of the Indian Constitution so that it would apply to Jammu & Kashmir. Further, in November 1956, Jammu & Kashmir introduced its own constitution as part of the Indian Federal Government. When the issue was raised by Pakistan in the Security Council, the UN passed a resolution in 1957 that reiterated the earlier UN resolutions on Kashmir. In the 1960s, the UN involvement in Kashmir was strongly discouraged by Soviet Russia, which made use of its veto power in the Security Council to enforce its stance. This was because Soviet Russia was reluctant to point to India as the aggressor. The last UN Security Council resolution (307) that dealt with Kashmir was passed in the wake of the India-Pakistan war of 1971. Thereafter, the role of the UN in the Kashmir conflict gradually faded in the Security Council.

Bilateral negotiations as a peacebuilding process in Kashmir

Bilateral negotiations had also been conducted by the leaders of both countries to resolve the dispute during the early period of the cold war. After the end of hostilities in the second Indo-Pakistan war in 1965, the Prime Minister of the Soviet Union invited the Indian Prime Minister Lal Bahadur Shastri and the Pakistani President Ayub Khan to engage in bilateral negotiations to end the hostilities between them. Both leaders met in Tashkent in January 1966 with the facilitation of the Soviet Prime Minister Kosygin and held bilateral talks that continued over six days. At the end of the bilateral talks both leaders signed the “Tashkent Declaration”, which mainly focused on restarting diplomatic relations between both countries and giving mutual assurances not to intervene in each other’s internal affairs. It also reiterated the importance of implementing the earlier agreements that had been signed by both countries. The Tashkent Declaration was based on the premise that holding bilateral talks was the best method for resolving disputes between the two countries (Bindra, 1981).

The Shimla Peace Agreement was another attempt to resolve the Kashmir conflict through bilateral negotiations (Grover, Arora, 1995). The bilateral talks were held between the Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi and the Pakistani Prime Minister Zulfikar Ali Bhutto from 28 June to 2 July 1972 at Shimla in Himachal Pradesh, India, in the wake of Pakistan’s defeat in the third war between the two countries in 1971. Pakistan had lost its Eastern Wing due to the forceful intervention of New Delhi in the war and the lack of international support. The Shimla agreement proposed a moderated definition of “ceasefire line,” which was originally established in 1949, after the IndoPakistan ceasefire in Kashmir. The Shimla agreement included the following provisions:

In Jammu and Kashmir, the line of control resulting from the ceasefire of December 17, 1971, shall be respected by both sides without prejudice to the recognized position of either side. Neither side shall seek to alter it unilaterally, irrespective of mutual differences and legal interpretations. Both

sides further undertake to refrain from the threat or the use of force in violation of this Line (Shimla Agreement, 1972).

The agreement defined the “ceasefire line,” which was originally established in 1949, after India and Pakistan agreed to the ceasefire in Jammu & Kashmir. It was then converted into a Line of Control (LOC), which from an Indian perspective turned the temporary border in the disputed territory of Kashmir into a de facto “permanent border between India and Pakistan”. Pakistan was forced to accept the change in the “status quo” in the wake of its defeat in the 1971 war.

Between 1989-1990, trouble started in Jammu & Kashmir due to the uprising of militant separatist movements that were fighting for the selfdetermination of Jammu & Kashmir (Singh, 1995). This civil war in Jammu & Kashmir fizzled out by the end of 1990.

The two countries again entered into an agreement, which was known as the “Lahore Declaration” in February 1999, when the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee visited Pakistan in a move to strengthen the bilateral relations and reduce the tension built up by the nuclear testing conducted by both India and Pakistan. The leaders agreed to foster peace and ensure security in the region by working together to resolve all their outstanding issues, including the Kashmir problem, by engaging in bilateral negotiations. Although the Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had stepped up cooperation to continue the peace process between the two countries through the Lahore Declaration, the cross-border guerrilla movements recommenced their activities in May 1999. A group of militants had surreptitiously crossed the border and entered Kargilin Jammu & Kashmir, following which the Indian Government sent its troops to Kargil to flush them out. Although the military operation was not spread out broadly, several air strikes were made by India in and around Kargil. This limited war in Kargil was recorded as the fourth India-Pakistan war.

Later, in January 2004, India and Pakistan carried the peace process further during the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) Summit held in Islamabad. An announcement of a joint dialogue to discuss outstanding issues between the two countries was made a month later, in February 2004. This process of peacebuilding was continued by the Manmohan Singh-led government that succeeded the Vajpayee’s government in May that year. The Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and the Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf met in New York in September 2004 and reaffirmed that they would “continue the bilateral dialogue to restore normalcy and cooperation between India and Pakistan”. Again, in April 2005, Musharraf visited New Delhi and the two leaders watched an India-Pakistan cricket match. After that there were many meetings between the official delegations of the two countries to work out an acceptable solution to the Kashmir conflict. The gradual development of the peace process that began in 2004 broke down in 2008 after the dismissal of the Pakistani Prime Minister by the Supreme Court of Pakistan (Jacob, 2011).

Developing cross-border terrorism in Jammu & Kashmir

Tensions between India and Pakistan increased in the 21st century in the context of acts of cross-border terrorism perpetrated in Jammu & Kashmir by militants who were allegedly sponsored by Pakistan (Jacob, 2011). Following the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament in December 2001, there was a tenmonth military mobilization along the India-Pakistan border. There were many other incidents too, connected to the Kashmir conflict that led to tensions between the two countries since 2008. Tension in the border areas along the Line of Control (LOC) in Kashmir and cross-border terrorism backed by Pakistan did much to affect the bilateral relations and the peace process on Kashmir. Many terrorist attacks were reported from mid-2008, among which were a suicide car bomb attack on the Indian Embassy in Kabul, Afghanistan, that killed 57 people, terrorist attacks in Bangalore and Ahmedabad, and the Mumbai terror attacks of November 2008. All these incidents seriously hurt the relations between the two countries (Ministry of External Affairs). Between November 2008 and February 2009, the world witnessed the imminent danger of a military confrontation between the two countries. Among those militant attacks, the last major incident in Kashmir occurred in 2016 when Islamic militants raided an Indian army camp in Uri, killing 20 soldiers. However, a formal peace process on Kashmir was not being pursued during that period. The New Delhi government alleged that Islamabad supported the terrorism in Kashmir. The latest terrorist attack was on a convoy of the Indian security forces in Pulvama, Jammu & Kashmir, that killed 46 soldiers in February 2019. The Indian Government believed that a suicide bombing had been carried out by Pakistanbacked terrorist groups. However, Pakistan vehemently denied the Indian charge. A few days later, India carried out a retaliatory strike in Pakistani territory on targets that India believed to be terrorist hideouts. Pakistan, too, hit back on some targets in India.

Scrapping Articles 370 and 35A on Jammu and Kashmir: An analysis

The Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi was re-elected with a huge mandate in May 2019. It suggests that the nationalist policy of Narendra Modi has been accepted by the majority of Indian voters. The main thrust of the election campaign of the ruling party centered on the terror attack that was believed to have been orchestrated by Pakistan. Soon after the re-election, the Indian Government headed by the Prime Minister Modi carried out the long-awaited ambitious project it had in mind for Kashmir: scrapping Arts. 370 and 35A of the Indian Constitution, which gave a special status to Kashmir. Due to this amendment, the special status accorded to this territory earlier was withdrawn. By revoking Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, the autonomy of Jammu & Kashmir was cancelled. In effect, the state of Jammu & Kashmir will be replaced by two new union territories known as Jammu & Kashmir and Ladakh (*The Hindu*, 2019b). This was the first time in Indian constitutional history that a “state” was converted into a union territory. In conjunction with this, Art. 35A empowers the Jammu & Kashmir legislature to define the permanent residents of the state, and their special rights and privileges. According to the reports from Jammu and Kashmir, this amendment brought changes to the land ownership rights and

gave preferential treatment to the people of the state in respect of jobs and education. Now Jammu & Kashmir lost its special status under the Indian Constitution and has been reduced to two union territories. The Jammu & Kashmir's status, is now lower than that of the other states. Instead of 29 states, India will now have 28 states. Kashmir will no longer have a Governor, rather a Lieutenant Governor, like in Delhi or Puducherry. According to the amendment, the Ladakh territory has been separated from the Jammu & Kashmir territory. (In the Ladakh area Hindus and Buddhists are in the majority). It is clear that the aim of these amendments is to strengthen the authority of the Central Government over Jammu & Kashmir by avoiding the legal obstacles in the Constitution that would have to be overcome in the case of a federal state. On the one hand, India has confirmed its policy on Kashmir again by stressing that it was legally annexed as an Indian territory in 1947, while on the other hand, the New Delhi government has used this as an opportunity to express to Islamabad its displeasure with the cross-border terrorism backed by Pakistan. However, in the context of longterm peace in Jammu & Kashmir, New Delhi's policy would be rather harmful to the internal politics of the new union territory. Deprived of its political status, the territory of Jammu & Kashmir could suffer a reversal of the democratic politics that has been practiced in the territory in the past. There is also a possibility that the Kashmiris may stop being part of the Indian political mainstream. Although crossborder terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism do take a terrible toll in Jammu & Kashmir, it is very important to maintain the trust the Kashmiris place in the Central Government of India. This is because the national political parties such as the Indian Congress still play a significant role in the local politics of Jammu & Kashmir. Following this amendment, huge mass protest movements were organized in Jammu & Kashmir, but the Indian Government managed to suppress those by imposing a long curfew and disconnecting the telecommunication and Internet services to Kashmir. The Indian Government never reversed its decision on the constitutional amendment.

Soon after the constitutional intervention in Kashmir, Pakistan showed its anger over this to the New Delhi government. The Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan mostly exercised a neutral policy on the Kashmir issue during the early period of his tenure. His approach to solve the Kashmir dispute was to conduct bilateral talks between both countries to arrive at a peaceful solution. In short, the Pakistani Prime Minister Imran Khan extended a peaceful hand towards New Delhi to develop bilateral relations between the two countries. For example, the Prime Minister Khan notched a diplomatic achievement with the inauguration of the Kartarpur corridor, thereby allowing Indian Sikh pilgrims to visit Kartarpur, a holy place in Pakistan. However, after the decision to scrap the special status granted through Art. 370, Pakistan's position on the Kashmir conflict has reverted to what it was in the 1950s. The Pakistani leader addressed the General Assembly on the 75th anniversary of the United Nations Organization and called for Peace in the South Asian region (Suhasini, 2019). He pointed out that if there is to be a durable peace in the South Asian region, the Jammu & Kashmir dispute should to be resolved, and on the basis of international intervention. The call for international intervention to solve the Kashmir dispute was heard loudly during the coldwar period and that was the main slogan of Pakistan at the UN in the 1950s. Further, Pakistan enrolled as a member state in SEATO and CENTO, which

were established by the United States. Pakistan then expected these organizations to get involved in the Kashmir war in 1965 (Bindra, 1981). Imran Khan, however, is not the first Prime Minister to call for international intervention in the postcoldwar period. His predecessor, Nawaz Sharif, too raised the issue in the UN General Assembly in 2013 and 2015, while in 2017, the issue was raised by a Pakistani envoy, Maleeha Lodhi. China supported Pakistan by mentioning that the new situation with respect to the status of Kashmir should be raised in the Security Council of the United Nations. The notion of UN involvement in the Kashmir conflict is rather outdated now in the context of the new global order. This position has been endorsed by four of the permanent members of the UN Security Council, namely the United States, Russia, France, and the United Kingdom, which have all rejected the Chinese proposal that the Security Council should take up the Kashmir issue. Many countries, including the USA, believe that the scrapping of Art. 370 was India's internal matter. The USA has understood the strategic importance of India in the South Asian region in the context of the role that China is attempting to assume in the South Asian region, as well as globally (see Jacob, 2011). The close relations between Pakistan and China on the Belt and Road initiative have resulted in India replacing Pakistan as the United States' main strategic partner in the subcontinent. The US President Donald Trump even stated that he was willing to mediate between the two countries if they wished it. But India's stance was that there is no need for the USA to get involved in the issue. India believes there should not be any external intervention with respect to the Kashmir issue as it is an internal matter of the country. The Indian stance has now received greater support due to the new developments in the Indian Ocean region. The Western global powers have never underestimated the rising power of India and its importance to the global political balance, as well as the global economy. In other words, the Western powers expect India to stand as a bulwark against the growing influence of China in the Asian Region and Indian Ocean belt. In this context, peacebuilding in Kashmir will be handled by New Delhi according to India's interests.

Conclusion

The peacebuilding process that has been going on for seventy-three years in Kashmir has not made much progress in resolving the issues. The UN was involved from the early stages when the issues surfaced, and it made several attempts to arrive at a permanent solution to the dispute. Since Pakistan views Kashmir as an integral part of its territory, owing to its strategic location and the valley's Islamic identity, the territory has been claimed by it, leading to the dispute with India. Sometimes, the peace process is carried forward by holding bilateral talks but at other times a militaristic approach is adopted to resolve the issue. Although bilateral talks were making some progress, the crossborder terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism have jeopardized the gains made. Eventually, India lost all trust in bilateral talks because of Islamabad's hybrid policy (talk, talk, fight, fight) on the issue. New Delhi has always charged that the crossborder terrorism has been sponsored by Islamabad through Azad Kashmir. In recent times, devastating terrorist attacks on Indian soil have seriously called into question the internal security measures not only

in Jammu & Kashmir but across the whole of India. The terror attacks have spread out from the line of control to cover the entire country in the postcoldwar period. On the other hand, Chinese influence in the Indian subcontinent has been developing day by day. In the light of these happenings, India is now paying more attention to the national security of the country, while also being ready to take a stand as a regional power and with the intention of becoming a world power in the future. It is worth repeating that the peacebuilding process in Kashmir has been undermined by the cross-border terrorism as well as religious fundamentalism. Unless these disruptive and obstructionist tendencies are strictly eliminated, there will be no point in New Delhi and Islamabad engaging in any more bilateral negotiations.

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