Contents

Foreword, Terje Rød-Larsen vii
Acknowledgments ix
Map of Jammu and Kashmir xi

1 Introduction Waheguru Pal Singh Sidhu 1

Part 1 Subnational and National Dimensions

2 Warring over Peace in Kashmir Inpreet Kaur 13
4 India and Armed Nonstate Actors in the Kashmir Conflict D. Suba Chandran 49
5 Pakistan and Jihadi Groups in the Kashmir Conflict Rizwan Zeb 65
6 Women in the Valley: From Victims to Agents of Change Kavita Suri 81
7 Women and Peacebuilding in Azad Jammu and Kashmir Shaheen Akhtar 97
8 Sources of New Delhi’s Kashmir Policy P. R. Chari 117
9 Islamabad’s New Approach to Kashmir Hasan-Askari Rizvi 137

Part 2 International Dimensions

10 Kashmir in the International System Amitav Acharya and Arabinda Acharya 157
Notwithstanding the importance of the Kashmir issue, the sources and implications of the conflict remain seriously underresearched in the wider literature on international relations. At the same time, academic perspectives on the causes and implications of the dispute differ. One of the important contributions of the literature on international relations theories is that they help identify the general conditions that shape the situations of war and peace in the international system. The Cold War literature on regional conflicts was largely nontheoretical, but one could detect two underlying approaches to regional conflicts in the Third World. One, popular in the West, viewed them from the prism of superpower rivalry. From this perspective, regional conflicts were mainly a sideshow to, and a reflection of, the Cold War competition between the US and the Soviet Union. Another perspective, developed by scholars from the Third World as well as the West, focused on the territorial and demographic predicament of the postcolonial states, especially the lack of fit between the territorial boundaries and ethnic composition of new “nation-states.” Neither approach paid attention to ideational elements behind conflict formations, especially issues of national and group identity and their impact on the conflict. More recently, scholars have examined the Kashmir conflict in terms of contested national identities. These insights represent important advances over traditional and mainstream international relations theories, such as realism and liberalism.

This chapter examines the application of international relations theory to the study of regional conflicts and cooperation in the context of the Indo-Pak dispute over Kashmir. The aim of the chapter is not to offer a detailed examination of the dispute and the prospects for its resolution. Rather, it
selectively captures how the Kashmir conflict might look from an international relations theoretical perspective. The objective here is to identify the salient arguments embedded in the literature, which tend to get missed in the context of the Kashmir conflict if a less disciplined approach is applied. This is also pertinent to understanding the sources of the conflict and the prospects for its management and resolution, especially as, given the multidimensionality of the conflict, none of the approaches discussed here individually can explain it in its entirety.

**Sources of the Conflict**

In general, international relations theory offers three different lenses for understanding and explaining sources of international conflict. The first, realism, holds states to be the primary actors in international politics, engaged in an unending struggle for power and relative gain, thereby making conflict and war inevitable. Much of the realist view of conflict was developed during the Cold War and offered an overarching framework, which saw superpower intervention as the central dynamic shaping the emergence and trajectory of regional conflicts across continents. In this sense, regional conflicts such as Kashmir reflected the international power rivalry, often as a safety valve for the underlying tensions between the superpowers, which could not be released in the central strategic balance or on the European continent because of the danger of uncontrolled escalation. The superpowers manipulated regional conflicts through security alliances, arms sales, arms aid, economic and technical assistance, and related means. In South Asia, for example, the US sought to enlist Pakistan in its web of alliances against the Soviet Union, which was interpreted by India as dragging the South Asian region into the Cold War rivalry. Islamabad provided eager assistance to balance the larger powers’ superior position in the region. An enduring and protracted conflict involving Kashmir considerably undermined India’s strategic significance. It also influenced the Western perception about India. Islamabad’s success in bringing in extraregional powers, its capacity to create crises and wars and keep the Kashmir issue on the boil, effectively weakened India’s power position in the global system.

Later variants of realism, especially what is known as neorealism, tend to view the rise and decline of regional conflicts as primarily a function of the distribution of power. For example, neorealist scholars such as Kenneth Waltz and John Mearsheimer have argued that bipolar international systems tend to be more peaceful compared to multipolar ones. The proponents of this view seek to validate the argument by the fact that World War II was not followed by any major armed conflagration on the world scale. During
This period, armed hostilities among the nations were rather localized and less intense. However, the bipolar international system of the Cold War did not prevent three major wars between India and Pakistan involving Kashmir. And a structural realist perspective would predict that the end of bipolarity would lead to major escalation of regional conflicts such as Kashmir, but the Kashmir conflict has seen both escalation (Kargil) and de-escalation (recent peace moves). Hence, factors other than the presence or disappearance of bipolarity must be taken into consideration.

Traditionally, realism has paid far less attention to internal conflicts than to the international variety. It tends to ignore domestic political systems and ethnic and cultural identities that underpin regional conflicts in the Third World. A modified realist view would see the Kashmir conflict as being driven by the regional power rivalry between India and Pakistan. This would see the dispute as a manifestation of Indian hegemonism and Pakistan's efforts to resist it, as classical balance of power theory would dictate. From Islamabad's perspective, so long as India retains its designs of hegemony over South Asia, preeminence in Asia, and a great power role in the world, Pakistan would remain an obstacle to it. The power rivalry is aggravated by the interplay of religious ideologies and national interests between India and Pakistan. Hence the Kashmir dispute serves as the defining element of a "regional security complex" (to use Barry Buzan's term), with a measure of autonomy from global power rivalries.

Security complexes are defined by a high degree of security interdependence, such that the security of one actor cannot be realistically explained except in terms of the security of other actors in the complex. While it captures one aspect of the Kashmir dispute, security complex theory does not offer any concrete indicators for measuring security interdependence. Nor does it clearly establish the relative importance of an interdependence of rivalry vis-à-vis an interdependence of cooperation. The security complex theory is a structural theory, which in its original and parsimonious formulation, at least, neglects the role of individual actors and domestic politics, as well as that of ideational factors, including competing ideas and identities, as sources of conflict. For example, in the context of Kashmir, such a view ignores the Kashmiri nationalist claim to independence both from India and Pakistan, based on distinct Kashmiri identity (the Kashmiriyat) and the right of self-determination. This limits its utility in capturing and analyzing the Kashmir dispute. It is therefore difficult to explain the Kashmir conflict with systemic forces, including the changes in global power configurations.

A second theoretical perspective on international relations, liberalism, is more concerned with explaining the conditions for peace than the causes of war. But the absence of the conditions it identifies as conducive to peace may be seen as clues to the persistence of conflict. Liberalism has three
variants, focusing on domestic politics, economic interdependence, and international institutions. In the context of Kashmir, it has been argued that domestic political constraints have trapped both India and Pakistan into a scenario where the Kashmir issue has become the respective countries' nationalist discourse that "Pakistan is incomplete without Kashmir" or that "Kashmir is the crown-sympol of Indian secularism." Kashmir and insurgency provide both countries with excuses for colossal conventional military and nuclear buildups. Even as Pakistan continues to grapple with democratic stabilization, there has always been a tendency on the part of Pakistan's ruling class to define the liberation of Kashmir as a test for political survival and legitimacy. The military in Pakistan has developed a strong vested interest in keeping the Kashmir issue alive as a way of maintaining its hold over power. The Kashmir conflict has been routinely used as a national rallying point, as an issue to distract the Pakistani public from concerns of social inequality, sectarian conflict, and absence of social progress. The weakness in Pakistan's civil and political structures, its weak and corrupt civilian bureaucracy, and its feudal structures have prevented democratic consolidation despite periodic transitions from authoritarian rule. The low level of civic and political development in Pakistan has fueled, and is compounded by, an Islamic radicalism that began to increasingly permeate the Pakistani society, polity, and military in the 1980s. This was influenced by the Shia revolution in Iran and the penetration of the mujahedin into the madrasas of Pakistan during and in the aftermath of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Lack of strong civilian control of the military has empowered intelligence agencies, which have provided training and supervised the prosecution of a low-intensity conflict against India in Kashmir. However, the Kashmir dispute does not automatically validate the liberal arguments on the nature of domestic polity and institutions as catalysts for conflict or peace. The Kargil conflict took place when Pakistan was under a democratically elected government. Conversely, the continued momentum and the pace of the revived peace overtures in 2004 from Pakistan have been possible because of Musharraf, who heads a military regime.

Liberalism as a theory of international relations identifies low levels of economic interdependence and the absence of international institutions providing dispute settlement mechanisms as factors conducive to conflict between states. The absence of close economic links between Pakistan and India and the low level of intraregional trade in general mean the absence of a major constraint on the use of force by either side to secure a final solution of the Kashmir conflict. The potential of the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) in fostering economic integration has been stymied by the India-Pakistan disputes. SAARC has had no role in alleviating regional insecurities (Article 10 of the SAARC Declaration
tion on domestic politics, economic interdependence, and institutions. In the context of Kashmir, it has been argued that bilateral constraints have trapped both India and Pakistan into a course that “Pakistan is incomplete without Kashmir” or that Kashmir is the “eighth western countries with excuses for colossal conventional military buildups. Even as Pakistan continues to grapple with domestic issues, there has always been a tendency on the part of the military to define the liberation of Kashmir as a test of political legitimacy. The military in Pakistan has developed a strong interest in keeping the Kashmir issue alive as a way of maintaining power. The Kashmir conflict has been routinely used as a point of Pakistani public discourse and as a tool to distract the Pakistani public from its own political, economic, and social problems. The military’s desire to maintain control and to prevent the possibility of civilian control has contributed to the escalation of the conflict.

The military structure of Pakistan has been weakened by an Islamic radicalism that began to emerge in the 1980s. This Islamic radicalism has influenced the Pakistan military and politics, and has had a significant impact on Pakistan’s foreign policy. This trend has led to a decrease in the military’s influence over the government and its decision-making process.

The theory of international relations identifies low levels of confidence and the absence of international institutions as factors conducive to conflict. The potential for close economic links between Pakistan and India has been undermined by the use of force by either side to secure a final solution. The potential of the South Asian Association (SAARC) in fostering economic integration has been limited by the India-Pakistan disputes. SAARC has had no role in securities (Article 10 of the SAARC Declaration).

A constructivist account of the Kashmir dispute captures the crucial role of contested national identities as a source of the dispute and a factor in international relations. One important aspect of this literature, which seeks to explain the nature of the conflict, is the role of the rhetoric and symbolism in the construction of national identities. The constructivist perspective highlights the importance of the cultural and symbolic aspects of identity in shaping international relations.

From this perspective, the roots of the identity-dissonance that sustains the Kashmir conflict can be traced back to the partition of India based on the two-nation theory, which led to the development of different nationalisms that are now engaged in a contest of validation in the region. On the one hand is India’s civic and secular nationalism, founded on the principles of political pluralism, democratic governance, the federal structure of the Indian state, constitutionalism, and a democratic political culture that has been accommodative of diverse ethnic, linguistic, regional, and religious groups. It is important to bear in mind that this secular nationalism, conceived by its founders, such as Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru, has not been fully realized, and that there are ongoing challenges in the communal basis of politics. In recent years, however, it has been seriously challenged by a resurgence of Hindu nationalism and the dominance of religious groups.

The contestation between the official secular nationalism and Hindu chauvinistic nationalism has not dampened the consensus that Kashmir constitutes the integral aspect of the Indian polity. Moreover, the Indian elite sees the Kashmir issue as a crucial test of its national cohesion. It fears that the secession of Kashmir would create a domino effect elsewhere, triggering violent regional, political, religious, and ethno-linguistic secessionist trends that would undermine the foundations of India’s diverse liberal democratic polity and pluralism. This has been an issue that Indian leaders have found difficult to rationalize. As Nehru himself inquired, why only two nations of Hindus and Muslims? Why not nations of Sikhs, Christians, and Buddhists, even if some of these religious groups are separated by geography, race, and language?

“For if nationality is based on religion there are many nations in India.”12
India's secular nationalism contrasts with a Pakistani national identity rooted in the two-nation theory. This affirms Pakistan's mission as the homeland of Muslims in South Asia. Its religious nationalism is premised on a pan-Islamic polity that would encompass the diverse ethnic, denominational, linguistic, and regional groups in its social mosaic. As a Muslim-majority state, Kashmir's integration with Pakistan would be essential to the completeness of Pakistan, and has since been seen by the Pakistani elite as an unfinished business of the partition. The idea of Pakistan as the homeland of the Muslims in South Asia suffered a major setback in 1947, when Kashmir acceded to India in the face of Pakistani incursion into the Kashmir Valley. Another setback, occurring in 1971, was the revolt by and loss of East Pakistan with the help of Indian intervention. Despite these blows to Pakistan's identity as the regional Muslim homeland, Pakistan continues to reject the Kashmiri nationalism that would be the basis of a Kashmiri state independent from both India and Pakistan. Indeed, Pakistan is not supportive of an independent Kashmir, believing that the choice, if ever a plebiscite takes place, would be between accession to Pakistan and that to India.

Between the Indian and Pakistani nationalisms lies an indigenous Kashmiri nationalism relying on a distinct articulation of the region's shared ethnic, linguistic, and regional characteristics. The Kashmiri identity, referred to as Kashmiriyat, has given Kashmiri nationalism a nonreligious orientation, its specificity derived from the fusion and assimilation of varied faiths and cultures. "The land, the climate, the geography shaped the evolution of their particular ethnic profile. A common language bound them closer into a distinct cultural grouping." The object of Kashmiri nationalism is independence from both Pakistan and India. Except for Islamic militant groups, there is not much demand for accession to Pakistan among the Kashmiris. While the discourse on Kashmiri nationalism has sought to advance the argument that Kashmir's accession to India has been a major factor in stabilizing relations between the Hindus and the Muslims, the potential for the rise of Hindu communalism has nonetheless made Kashmiri apprehensive about their future in India. Hindu communalism itself also suffers from internal contradictions, with the identification of the Jammu Hindus, the Dogra Hindus, and the Pandits with India. Another challenge is the Tibetan Buddhist presence in Ladakh, which is more Tibetan than Kashmiri. The Kashmir Valley contains an ethnic mix reproducing the contestations between Indian and Pakistani nationalisms. The Soviet withdrawal from Afghanistan, followed by the influx of the jihadis into Kashmir, created the possibility of a militant Islamic nationalism replacing the ethnic nationalist agenda of Kashmiri self-determination of the earlier period. But it has also led to the emergence of a new ethnic nationalism of Kashmiris disaffected both by India’s role and by the activities of Islamic militants based in Pakistan, which have exploited the
contrasts with a Pakistani national identity. This affirms Pakistan’s mission as the Muslim state in Asia. Its religious nationalism is premised on a desire to encompass the diverse ethnic, denominational, and religious groups in its social mosaic. As a Muslim-majority state, Pakistan has since been seen by the Pakistani elite as the reference point. The idea of Pakistan as the homeland of the Muslim world has been further justified by the fact that it has since been seen by the Pakistani elite as the reference point.

The competing identities of states and groups involved in the Kashmir dispute matter not only in capturing the complex routes of the conflict, but also in shaping the prospects for conflict resolution. They suggest limitations to approaches that conceptualize the Kashmir dispute as a conventional interstate territorial conflict, aggravated by outside intervention, whether it was the Cold War rivalry between the US and the (then) Soviet Union, or Chinese support for Pakistan now. In addition, approaches that do not take into consideration the domestic political configurations of both India and Pakistan are unlikely to make headway in moving the dispute toward durable resolution. While the international community does have a role in conflict resolution, this has to take into consideration the fact that the main factors affecting conflict resolution may be internal to both India and Pakistan, as well as to the Kashmir region itself.

Prospects for Stability and Conflict Resolution

Realists foresee no permanent escape from the “security dilemma” that states find themselves to be locked in. Their best hope is not peace, but the maintenance of stability through power balancing. Realists would argue that the best hope for Kashmir would be the maintenance of a stable balance of power between India and Pakistan. The competitive acquisition of nuclear weapons by India and Pakistan in 1998 serves as an example of the realist position that the balance of power (in this instance a balance of terror) would sustain peace between the two nuclear rivals. Nuclear deterrence encourages the peaceful conflict resolution. Pakistan’s nuclear capability nullifies India’s traditional edge in conventional arms and perhaps deters a preemptive strike by India on Pakistani-held Kashmir to stamp out terrorist training camps. Realists would also argue that the risks of accidental nuclear conflict could be reduced through the negotiation and implementation of crisis stability measures (nuclear risk reduction measures), as well as arms control and confidence and security building measures initiatives. But one fundamental weakness of this position is that nuclear deterrence does not necessarily discourage limited wars. Under the shadow of the nuclear weapons, adversaries could undertake a range of minor ventures and proxy wars with impunity as surrogates for direct conflict. One example of this dynamic was the 1999 Kargil episode. As the Kargil Review Committee noted, South Asian nuclear deterrence reduced the risks of major conven-
tional wars only up to a given threshold, the margin of which was exploited by Pakistan. Similarly, as Michael Krepon has noted, “Pakistan’s support for separatism and militancy in Kashmir has notably coincided with its acquisition of covert nuclear capabilities.” Such instances, which also include the military mobilization by India and Pakistan following December 2001 terrorist attacks against the Indian parliament, could test strategic stability severely.

India’s quest for great power status may also be conducive to the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. This would lead one to expect that India, as an emerging great power in international relations, with an eye on permanent membership on the UN Security Council, and with its new emphasis on economic growth and integration into the global economy, will want to step out of the South Asia tinderbox. India’s emerging economic profile notwithstanding, the Indo-Pak imbroglio continues to keep New Delhi’s wider strategic role circumscribed as India’s net military power remains the sum of its own capabilities minus those of Pakistan (which are directed largely toward the diminution of New Delhi). Stability in the Indo-Pak relations would allow India to devote more attention and resources to pursuing its economic and strategic interests in the Indian Ocean and Southeast Asia. India’s “look east” policy, which calls for closer diplomatic-economic-strategic partnerships in the Asia-Pacific region, cannot be pursued meaningfully so long as it remains locked in a persisting confrontation with Pakistan. This will create new incentives for India to show greater flexibility on the Kashmir issue and accept international mediation in the dispute.

Liberal approaches would focus first and foremost on developing Indo-Pak economic interdependence, either bilaterally or through regional mechanisms. Economic cooperation at the regional level has the potential to galvanize nations to come together, accelerate the pace of development, and share the dividends. The bonds of togetherness born out of economic mutuality can in turn resolve intraregional tensions. Trade and geo-economics have the potential to replace Cold War-era security preoccupations. Pakistan’s strategic interests in Kashmir, for example, are driven partly by geo-economics, along with strategic and religious considerations; Kashmir contains the headwaters of the rivers running into West Punjab, Pakistan’s main agricultural province, which is greatly dependent on irrigation for its prosperity. Major General Akbar Khan, who planned the 1947 invasion of Kashmir, noted how vital, from the economic point of view, Kashmir is for Pakistan. “Our agricultural economy was dependent particularly upon rivers coming out of Kashmir . . . what then would be our position if Kashmir was to be in Indian hands?”

Another area of economic interdependency concerns the energy sector. India is a rapidly growing energy market, with the ability to absorb new
sources of supply as they materialize in the region. Pakistan could be a potential transit route for energy from Iran and Central Asia. This would require major capital investment and the construction of one or more new pipelines, a project that requires a degree of political stability within Pakistan and peace in India-Pakistan relations. According to some estimates, Pakistan could gain $600 to $800 million per year in transit fees. It would also be able to use the pipelines to fulfill its own energy needs. India would benefit from diversified sources of pipeline gas and lower dependence on more expensive liquid natural gas.

Though there are significant economic complementarities between India and Pakistan, they have not been exploited fully due to the political disposition of the two countries. In 2003–2004, India exported only $303.7 million worth of goods to Pakistan, out of $67.54 billion in total exports. India’s imports from Pakistan were only $60.74 million in 2003–2004. During this period, bilateral trade between India and Pakistan was on the order of $345 million, whereas India’s exports alone to Bangladesh and Sri Lanka were $1.65 billion and $1.324 billion respectively. Islamabad does not extend normal GATT/WTO rights or Most Favored Nation (MFN) status to India. Pakistan has a list of 600 items that can be legally imported from India. India granted MFN treatment to Pakistan in 1995–1996 and has no list of permitted or forbidden products. Informal India-Pakistan trade is much larger, estimated at $1 to $2 billion annually, involving such goods as chemicals, medicines, videotapes, cosmetics, and viscose fiber. These goods find their way either through third markets, such as Dubai and Singapore, or through smuggling. Legalizing and further developing this trade, which the Federation of Indian Chamber of Commerce (FICCI) estimates to be something like $3 to $4 billion annually, could have a stabilizing effect on India-Pakistan relations and ultimately create opportunities for negotiating a settlement to the Kashmir dispute.

Liberal-institutionalists would suggest that concerns arising out of interdependence could be mitigated through institutionalized cooperation. According to this view, nations concede “political advantages” to one another with the expectation of “receiving proportionate advantages in return.” Institutions change the incentive for states to cheat; they also reduce transaction costs, link issues, increase the amount of information available to participants in cooperative arrangements, and make commitments more credible. A number of studies have established the impact of institutions, that “clear causal links unambiguously demonstrate that treaty rules independently influenced behavior,” and that involvement of international organizations in “sanctions” strongly correlates with high levels of cooperation. In South Asia, even though the SAARC is devoid of a security mandate, it could nonetheless provide a useful framework for functional cooperation that could create an improved climate for peace between India
and Pakistan. Such progress could come through moving forward on the South Asia Preferential Trade Agreement (SAPTA).

Some may argue that interdependence or institutions alone will not suffice as conditions for peace in South Asia in the absence of genuine democratization in Pakistan. Realists also argue that democratization by itself is no guarantee of peace in the short term. Critics of the democratic peace theory have argued that newly democratizing states are often neither liberal nor peaceful. Experience shows that democratization can fuel virulent nationalism and aggravate the danger of war. In fact, the earliest phases of democratization have triggered some of the world’s bloodiest nationalist struggles, often leading up to armed violence, in a number of regions beginning to experiment with electoral democracy. In the past, democratic governments in Pakistan have not necessarily brought about improved India-Pakistan relations. This is partly because, elections notwithstanding, the military has managed to cast a shadow over elected governments in Pakistan and influenced their policy on Kashmir. On the other hand, as the recent peace initiatives suggest, the military regime under President Musharraf is at the forefront in pushing for a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem. It is noteworthy that Musharraf has managed to keep the tempo going even as India underwent major political changes following general elections in 2004.

The involvement of both India and Pakistan in regional and international persuasion and socialization—mechanisms emphasized by constructivist theories of international relations—thus could create viable conditions for achieving lasting peace in Kashmir. Socialization is different from mediation and arbitration, which are more political and legal mechanisms, although the former can create more conducive conditions for the latter. The international community’s early role in the Kashmir dispute stressed the facilitation of self-determination for Kashmir. The UN constituted the UN Commission on India and Pakistan (UNCIP) in July 1948 to assess the material conditions for the conduct of a UN-administered plebiscite. This was, however, overtaken by the deployment of Pakistani and Indian armed forces in the area. The United States, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union, and the European Union have on a number of occasions shown interest in mediating on the Kashmir issue. But India has objected to such focused outside mediation, emphasizing that Kashmir is a bilateral dispute between India and Pakistan and must be dealt with bilaterally, without outside mediation. But bilateralism alone will not create sufficient domestic legitimacy for either side to sustain any solution that might be acceptable to the governments of the two countries. This is because of the sensitivity of the issue in both countries’ domestic context. For Pakistan, the regime would find it extremely difficult to sell any proposal on Kashmir short of its secession from India and integration with Pakistan. Radical groups have
could come through moving forward on the South Asia Free Trade Agreement (SAFTA).

Dependence or institutions alone will not suf

South Asia in the absence of genuine democracy also argue that democratization by itself is not a short-term solution. Critics of the democratic peace theorize that democratization can fuel virulent nationalism, not end it. In fact, the early phases of democracies in some of the world’s bloodiest nationalist struggles, such as the Irish Troubles in Northern Ireland, have shown that democratization can be accompanied by violence, in a number of regions beginning to emerge as democracies. In the past, democratic governments have sought to bring about improved India-Pakistan relations, but elections notwithstanding, the military has never been allowed to elect governments in Pakistan and influence policy. On the other hand, as the recent peace initiative under President Musharraf shows, the act of having elections is crucial in bringing about a long-term solution to the Kashmir problem. It is the act of having elections that has managed to keep the tempo going even as political changes following general elections in

India and Pakistan in regional and international settings—mechanisms emphasized by constructivists—can provide viable conditions for resolving the Kashmir dispute. Socialization is different from mediation; it is more political and legal mechanisms, which are more conducive conditions for the latter. The key role in the Kashmir dispute stressed the need for a resolution. The UN constituted the UN Commission of Inquiry (UNCOI) in 1948 to assess the conduct of a UN-administered plebiscite. This was followed by the deployment of Pakistani and Indian armed forces in Kashmir. The United Nations, the United Kingdom, the Soviet Union have on a number of occasions shown concern over the Kashmir issue. But India has objected to such mediation and must be dealt with bilaterally, but without formalization alone will not create stable conditions for a solution acceptable to both countries. This is because of the sensitivity of India’s domestic context. For Pakistan, the regime is difficult to sell any proposal on Kashmir short of its right to self-determination, or integration with Pakistan. Radical groups have

castigated Musharraf’s ongoing Kashmir peace overtures as betrayal and have questioned his legitimacy for going around the UNSC resolutions on Kashmir. As Musharraf himself admitted, “We cannot do anything against the wishes of the people of Pakistan. We need to develop a consensus with the people of Pakistan. The issue is very contentious.” From an Indian perspective, additional territorial concessions to Pakistan would also be too difficult to concede. It is in this context that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh ruled out further concessions on the LoC during his meetings with the visiting Pakistani president in April 2005.

Against this backdrop, and given the continued weakness of SAARC and its avoidance of serious issues, one avenue for greater socialization between India and Pakistan would come from their common membership in larger Asian regional groupings (aside from the development of “second track” mechanisms and processes at the South Asian and wider Asia levels). The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is the only multilateral security organization in the Asia-Pacific region. For the first time, India and Pakistan are members of the same regional security organization. Outside mediation in the Kashmir dispute remains a distant possibility so long as India champions strict adherence to the doctrine of noninterference in the internal affairs of India. But attitudes toward the doctrine are changing. Although the ARF is supposed to keep contentious bilateral issues such as Kashmir out of its agenda, common membership in a regional security organization will have a calming effect on India-Pakistan bilateral relations and offer an avenue through which the regional community could encourage restraint on the parties when conflict appears imminent.

Another helpful and complementary development initiative could be to persuade India and Pakistan to participate in a multilateral framework involving the US, China, and Russia, and possibly the European Union and Japan (or some combination thereof, although the US and China, as well as Russia, would have to be involved). Such a multilateral framework would ensure greater crisis stability in the subcontinent. China’s close relations with Pakistan give it a measure of influence over Pakistan’s decision to escalate the Kashmir dispute. Russia has a certain amount of goodwill with India, which is a major buyer of Russian weapons. Moreover, thanks to September 11, the US now enjoys close relations with both India and Pakistan (as well as closer understanding with China). This gives Washington an unprecedented ability not only to pull India and Pakistan back from the brink in the event of a crisis, but also to persuade them to more actively seek a lasting peaceful resolution of the conflict. This could be the basis of a system of at least five-party talks (with Japan and the EU serving as associate members if their full membership is not feasible) involving India, Pakistan, Russia, China, and the US. The aim of such talks would be to complement India-Pakistan bilateral negotiations, both by offering a stamp of international legitimacy and by
facilitating the flow of resources that would be needed to ensure viable post-
conflict peace and reconstruction in the Kashmir area. India might see this as
unwelcome “outside” mediation in the Kashmir dispute. But a five-party
framework involving India and Pakistan, which complements rather than
substitutes for their bilateral efforts, does not have to be meddlesome. It
could help to provide a peaceful resolution of the conflict by offering strategic
reassurance to both India and Pakistan that they could protect their core
interests and derive security gains from a resolution of the Kashmir conflict,
including an end to cross-border terrorism threatening India, and a role for
Pakistan (through either partial or joint control over a postconflict Kashmir)
that would satisfy its core interests in the dispute. The multilateral frame-
work could ensure adequate local political and administrative autonomy for
the Kashmiris through a system of democratic governance and international
guarantees that would recognize and respect their ethnonational identity
without necessarily creating a sovereign state. While a multilateral solution
may sound unrealistic, it is perhaps no more so than alternatives advanced by
the various parties.

Conclusion

Unlike realism or other rationalist perspectives on international relations,
social constructivism argues that the interests and identities of states are not
exogenous to the process of their mutual interaction. This is an important
point in understanding the Kashmir conflict and prospects for its solution.
The conflict defies simple definition and an easy solution. It is difficult to
put the conflict in overreaching nationalist terms alone, or to define it as a
competition over territory. Nor can it be explained solely in terms of the
two-nation theory, referencing only the religious considerations that were
the basis of the partition of the subcontinent in 1947.

This chapter has offered a broader perspective in defining the conflict,
including ideational variables, such as culture and identity, in addition
to strategic and institutionalist considerations. Viewing Kashmir through
this lens is useful not just in identifying its underlying causes, but also in
seeking a lasting settlement. Cooperative multilateral arrangements and ini-
tiatives can do much to shed the rigidity of the two sides on the issue.
Musharraf’s suggestion that the two countries develop a consensus through
debate and discussions before their leadership can determine what kind of
solution is possible among India, Pakistan, and the people of Kashmir rep-
resented an acknowledgement that any solution to the conflict is not to be
based on a predetermined formula, or on proposals unilaterally advanced by
either side reflecting its narrow national interests.39 Seeking the right for-
mula for peace in Kashmir is not exogenous to the diplomatic, political,
economic, and ultimately social interaction among India, Pakistan, and the Kashmiris.

Notes

5. Ibid., p. 83.


