

**CONFLICT MANAGEMENT**

**IN A NEW ERA:**

**Lessons for South Asia**

*Edited by*

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The views expressed in this book are those of the authors and do not purport to reflect the position of the Department of International Relations

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## CONTENTS

Preface <i>Wasim Sajjad</i>	i
Introduction <i>Talat Ayesha Wizarat</i>	v
Inaugural Address <i>Dr. Hein Kiessling</i>	vii
The Interaction of Conflict Perception and Conflict Resolution- Basic Requirements and The South Asian Context <i>Diethelm Weidemann</i>	1
Ethnic Conflict Management in South Asia the Case of Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh <i>Sabbir Ahmed</i>	11
Challenges to the State System in South Asia the Case of Sri Lanka <i>P. Saravanamutto</i>	37
Elections in Indian-Held Kashmir And Resolution of the Kashmir Dispute <i>Shaheen Akhter</i>	49
The Assembly Elections in Jammu and Kashmir A Stepping -Stone to Peace? <i>Robert G. Wirsing</i>	79
Options for Pakistan and India in Kashmir A View Point from Germany <i>Dietrich Reetz</i>	93
Handling Conflicts: Bosnia - A Lesson for South Asia? <i>Citha D. Maass</i>	117

Sustainable Reduction of Military Expenditure-Its Impact On Conflict Resolution In South Asia <i>Ayesha Siddiqa-Agha</i>	133
Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia: A Case for Conflict Resolution <i>Syed Salahuddin Ahmad</i>	163
Conflict Management and the Role of Third Party Mediation <i>Moonis Ahmar</i>	173
New Trends in Conflict Prevention, Management and Resolution: Implications for South Asia <i>Trevor Findlay</i>	197
Speech at the Conclusion of the Seminar <i>Ambassador (Retd.) Ross Masood Husain</i>	219



## PREFACE

The ongoing turmoils in the presence of a continued resolve to search and strive for a better canvas of the South Asian panorama portray man's ultimate wish for conflict resolution in the post cold war era. The crux of the solutions elaborated in this compilation is the much-needed acceptance of the fact that 'conflicts should not be treated as a negative phenomenon' because these also provide a driving force for human evolution. It is, in fact, our behaviour, the traditional attitude to resolve conflicts by militancy, coercion and the use of force which, no doubt, carry negative connotations.

Ethnic tensions in South Asia appear to have the potential to hamper regional cooperation because, as experience has shown, domestic conflicts can sometimes spill over the state boundaries. In such cases, conflict management shall call for a certain degree of cooperation among the affected states. For this, these governments have to look beyond their respective national concerns and identify priorities on a regional rather than on a strictly national basis.

This complex and intriguing design of ethnic group mobilization and its demands for 'affirmative discrimination', autonomy and secession have resulted into a noteworthy trend in the South Asian countries, of a growing congregation of separatist demands since the 70's. It is important to analyse as to why this protest and a tendency to revolt was taking root at various levels against the established power structures in certain States.

Conflict resolution demands a clear perception and understanding of the term itself. As Urmila Phadnis writes in 'Regional Cooperation and Development in South Asia', the word 'ethnic' has been derived from the Greek word 'ethnikos'; the term originally appears to mean somewhat pejorative, particularistic and imbued with parochial connotations. It also focussed on 'heathen, pagan, gentile, non-Jewish, non-Christian nations'. The key components of the term were 'unity of race, descent and culture'. However, as we know, objective attributes of all these factors undergo a constant change: religion, for instance has many sub-groupings and colour many shades.

## **OPTIONS FOR PAKISTAN AND INDIA IN KASHMIR A VIEW POINT FROM GERMANY**

**Dietrich Reetz**

The Kashmir issue is a matter of grave concern for both Pakistan and India which carries implications for the future of the two countries. That applies even more to the third, and perhaps the major party in the conflict, the people of Jammu and Kashmir. Since the positions of Pakistan and India on Kashmir are mutually exclusive they preclude any settlement, unless a compromise solution is acceptable to the disputants. It would similarly prevent any academic discussion of the matter, since both sides would strongly argue, that their position is put to grievance. A detached analysis would be virtually ruled out since it was bound to disregard the high moral ground both sides claim for themselves on this issue. It may, therefore, seem pretentious to suggest options on Kashmir from the perspective of an outsider. At the same time, the deadlock persisting in the South Asian debate on Kashmir strengthens the merits of an outside academic intervention.

It is, therefore, not proposed to advocate the agenda of one or the other side in the conflict. The following are intentionally and consciously subjective observations, approaching the case on its own merits as they present themselves to the author. Since it is desired to concentrate on what is sometimes called the dynamic element in the situation, all aspects which do not fall in the category here have been left out deliberately, without any prejudice to their impact. This applies to the Northern Areas, to Ladakh, and other issues. For brevity, the Pakistan-controlled part will be called the Pakistani Kashmir and the Indian-controlled the Indian Kashmir, again without meaning any offense to other positions. Likewise, this paper will not go into the details of the case history as numerous publications have dealt with this aspect of the matter.

What mainly is intended to do here is to point out the way this conflict seems to be structured, as far as options are concerned. Options seek to describe what the parties involved can do, consider-

ing the realities on the ground and irrespective of their own agenda. Options, that is the margins of maneuver, can be defined in terms of correlations among the constituent elements of a situation. One has to identify the more common and permanent trends at work and how they relate to each other. This paper refers to constituent components such as the internal situation in the Indian and in the Pakistani Kashmir, the political situation in India and in Pakistan, the regional situation in South and West Asia and the international situation, although such factors could possibly also be identified under a different angle. For the current analysis, this is not essential since it focuses more on their correlation than on their definition.

By correlation, a relationship is highlighted which is created by action and reaction of a certain issue, where a particular act is bound to evoke a certain response from another component. When looking at the history of any conflict, one can discern a certain pattern of responses by the involved sides which is conditioned by factors such as the strength and influence of the sides, internal conditions and external influences. For instance, there seems to exist a correlation between the stability or strength of the central government in India or Pakistan and prospects for a compromise solution on Kashmir, as weak governments in both countries would find it difficult to carry through a conflict resolution requiring substantial concessions. This kind of correlation often appears to be fairly stable, especially when dealing with a long drawn-out conflict like Kashmir. Such correlation, whether open or hidden, often defines or limits the options of the parties involved. Sometimes, such correlation is acknowledged publicly, like the one just mentioned. Sometimes such correlation is not debated at all, since the sides involved believe that such debate would damage their case, yet it still exists and all parties to the conflict are aware of it, act within its parameters and use it for their own purposes. An example of this kind of non-public correlation is the one between major national political parties in India and Pakistan and the Kashmir issue. The political parties use the Kashmir conflict for political mobilization without genuine interest in its solution. Their interest in Kashmir seems to serve the sole purpose of cornering the political opponent and of using its potential for blackmail to force the adversary into compliance or submission. Parties like the PPP in Pakistan and the BJP in India (though it is not meant to equate them on a general basis) are cases in point since both of them most recently tried to gain doubtful political mileage out of

their very public support for the cause of Kashmir. For this paper, three types of correlations have been selected for scrutiny which are regarded as central to the Kashmir conflict. Their implications will be looked into as well as the way they are changing under current circumstances.

The Kashmir conflict like any other conflict has several levels on which it is being played out. There is the historical side to it, the conflicting claims to the former principality of Jammu and Kashmir by India, Pakistan and by certain Kashmiri political forces. And there is a more acute form of the conflict in terms of actual tension accompanied by militant activities and unrest which will come into focus here. The current tense phase of the conflict emanates from events in the Indian Kashmir. Since 1989, tension has been reigning high. According to various estimates, more than 20,000 people were killed in protest action as well as in security operations, including a large number of civilians both in the administration and among the population, beside militants and security personnel.<sup>1</sup> As a result of the concomitant ethnic cleansing, around 300,000 members of the Hindu minority community of the Kashmiri Pandits felt forced to take temporary refuge in India in make-shift residence at times under appalling conditions. When amidst cheers, tears and fears on October 9, 1996, Farooq Abdullah, the leader of the National Conference of Jammu and Kashmir, was sworn in as the new Chief Minister of this state, history seemed to come full circle for him personally and for the region. The stunning political revival which he and his party had achieved, was a measure of the desperation of the people who, after all their suffering being thoroughly disillusioned with this party, were willing to give it another chance in order to reinstate politics once again in preference over violence and terror. After the abating of tension had been in evidence for some months already acute tension is further subsiding since the induction of the elected state government into office.<sup>2</sup>

The resumption of elective party politics points to the type of correlation briefly introduced above the correlation between the stability of affairs in the Indian Kashmir and the acuteness of the overall conflict. It is contended here that this correlation is central to the dynamics of the acute phases of the conflict. Whenever the Indian Kashmir was quite the conflict was not acute, and vice versa. Why is this so important? This is so important because it has a

number of implications some of which are not obvious.

It means that no matter how much support was coming from across the border from Pakistan, no incitement of unrest could succeed if it did not meet with a significant amount of toleration or support by the local population in the Indian Kashmir, rooted in disillusion and alienation from the state government.

It also means that to a large extent India could influence and could have managed the actual state of affairs in Kashmir more smoothly had it succeeded in establishing a lasting political set-up reflecting the aspirations of the people. The advantage of democratic process in cases like Kashmir lies in the room for adjustment they provide. Ethnic and religious militancy in various parts of India has usually expressed discontent with the parties in power, questioned their competence and judiciousness, mostly such upheaval brought alternative groups to the forefront of the state's ruling elite. One caste, religious or occupational group was being replaced by a less prosperous and more dynamic group etc. Stagnant, autocratic or highly polarised political setups cannot fulfill this task of adjustment. In Kashmir, a fully operative democratic process is even more important because of its undecided status. The ambiguous status of Kashmir provides the people with the opportunity of questioning the legitimacy of Indian rule over the state *per se* when they lose faith in the state government. This is vastly different from the situation in other conflict-prone states in India like Assam, Punjab or Tamilnadu, where political opposition ultimately could or would not go beyond the change of the party at the helm of affairs of the state.

It equally means that the Congress party probably shares a large part of the blame for the continued destabilisation of politics in the Indian Kashmir. This is not so because of any inherent 'wickedness' of Congress. The problem is that both the Indian National Congress and the National Conference in Kashmir court the same segment of the electorate, essentially appeal to the same political constituency of socially concerned and liberal minded middle class and minority voters. Such acute rivalry with a local party of a similar profile has lead Congress also in Indian states to make or break the competitor by all means, fair or foul. This was the reason why Congress clandestinely started supporting extremist parties which could weaken the appeal of moderate regional parties which was also repeated in the case of

Sikh extremism in the Punjab, and Tamil extremism in Tamilnadu. for Kashmir it has been mentioned by analysts that it was Congress that encouraged the Jamaat-i-Islami to stand for elections in 1972 in order to weaken the Plebiscite Front representing Sheikh Abdullah's party at the time.<sup>3</sup> Two accords between Congress and the National Conference, one in 1977, and the other in 1983, fell through, after the National Conference cancelled a coalition agreement with Congress. After that, the National Conference was put under intense pressure to comply. The 1986 accord between Rajiv Gandhi and Farooq Abdullah<sup>4</sup> was different in the sense that Rajiv wanted to make a serious effort to settle the regional conflicts besieging India at the time. He was ready to concede victory to the National Conference but he could not give up the habit of Congress politicians to 'fix' problems through backdoor deals and manipulation. By all available evidence, the opposition alliance of the Muslim United Front was forcibly shut out from many contests and it was anger over these elections which served as a trigger for the 1989/90 events. The share of the victory of the National Conference and of the votes for Congress were apparently agreed upon beforehand, a similar approach which he also showed in Punjab towards the Akali Dal. This however turned the envisaged solution of the problem into a fixed affair right from the beginning which again denied regional forces a level playing field.

This correlation is likewise important considering India's obsession with securing a full formal integration of the Jammu and Kashmir state into the Indian polity. This line of action proved counterproductive and completely ignored the correlation mentioned above, whereas many Indian observers repeatedly drew the attention of the public to this correlation. In particular, the refusal to grant full autonomy to Kashmir was held responsible for the reversals in the political fortunes of the state.<sup>5</sup> From formal integration apparently some assurance was expected that at least on legal grounds no one could hijack the state government of Jammu and Kashmir and than unilaterally accede to Pakistan, a notion betraying deep-seated suspicions about the motives of the National Conference, although in so many ways the national Conference and Congress were and acted like political allies.

From this perspective, it was probably only the United Front

government that could achieve a breakthrough on the election issue. It was sufficiently weak not to be able to impose its own candidates on the Kashmir elections in a massive and fraudulent way, and it was sufficiently strong to neutralize Congress and the BJP, preventing them from muscling their way into the elections, a situation which caused considerable embarrassment to the state unit of Congress. It accused the centre, and also the central Congress leadership, of deliberately weakening Congress in Jammu and Kashmir, which hopefully is not true either, since that would restart the game on the wrong foot.

Why did developments in the Pakistani Kashmir not have the same impact on the acuteness of the Kashmir issue?

For one, its resources and size were considerably less than those of the Indian Kashmir.<sup>6</sup>

Second, its politics never had any semblance of independence. Right from the first time when elections were held in 1970, its politics were of an appendix character and degenerated into a highly personalised squabble between different stalwarts of the Muslim Conference and the Azad Kashmir branch of the People's Party, where floor-crossing, corruption charges and forcible eviction from office were the order of the day.

Third, India could never really get involved in a campaign to evict Pakistan from Azad Kashmir. Though claiming publicly otherwise, somehow there seemed to be a consensus in India that come what may Azad Kashmir at least would stay with Pakistan and there was not much sense in tugging with it.<sup>7</sup>

This correlation lastly implies that Pakistan had not much real influence over the state of the Kashmir conflict, its acuteness or otherwise, since it could not fundamentally alter the state of affairs in the Indian Kashmir, that is as far as political allegiances were concerned. One can even leave aside the controversial question whether or not material support from Pakistan was partly responsible for militant action. Even if full Pakistani support and responsibility is assumed, it could never decide political allegiances in the Indian Kashmir. If the militancy had any political effect in recent years, it made the local population weary and disenchanted with the

militants from whom apparently no solution of their problems could be expected. The militancy made the people rather return to Farooq after they had deserted him massively during the unrest. The maximum apparently that Pakistan can do is to prevent the issue from dying from withering into a perpetuation of the status-quo, and that too only when there is widespread alienation in the Indian Kashmir. The more or less widespread participation in the last state elections also shows that it is the lack of tangible benefits which the local population in the Indian Kashmir can expect from an association with Pakistan that finally made them return to the ballot box.

For another key correlation it is contended here that Kashmir is no longer fully part of the grand national discourses of India and Pakistan, those on national liberation under the Congress flag and that of the Pakistan movement under the Muslim League. And again, this would have several important implications.

This contention seems more valid today than at any time previously. After the end of the cold war the grand antagonistic discourses on politics between Capitalism and Communism have disappeared. Other topics have come up on which the positions of countries like Pakistan and India, now no longer necessarily separated by opposing global loyalties and allegiances, are much closer. These include issues like the consequences of globalisation, the access of developing countries to financial markets, to technology, to world trade.<sup>8</sup>

Kashmir was part of the grand discourses of the subcontinent, of the national liberation movement led by the Indian National Congress and of the Pakistan movement led by the Muslim League. The question arises as to what extent these discourses continue to reflect political realities and command broad-based political support. Is it true that Kashmir, as Benazir contended, is the 'unfinished agenda of partition'?<sup>9</sup> Can any unfinished agenda of partition now proceed? Is that a realistic assessment? Or is it more true that the Kashmir issue was hijacked by Benazir in order to project herself rather than the Kashmir issue?

Outwardly, nothing much has changed. Political parties both in India and Pakistan make strong references to the national discourses in order to justify their stand on Kashmir. The PPP and the Muslim



League have done so in Pakistan, and likewise Congress and the BJP in India. But what do these references mean today and what are they aimed at?

Proceeding from the first correlation about the central role of the internal situation in the Indian Kashmir, the attraction of exploiting the Kashmir issue for short-term political gains is particularly difficult to withstand for Pakistan's political parties. This is again so not because Pakistan's parties are particularly vile, but because of the way Pakistan is tied into the situation. For Pakistan's parties, this essentially means that once a volatile situation offers itself in the Indian Kashmir, the major politicians literally feel obliged to jump on it and exploit it for their own political ends.<sup>10</sup> If one party refused to do so, the other party would do it in order to put it under pressure. The assumption would go that since you are neglecting Kashmir you are selling the interests of Pakistan. This would mean that even if a party in power for some reason or the other worked for a compromise solution with India, it can only do so as long as the situation in the Indian Kashmir is quiet. Paradoxically as it seems, it means that the so-called second *intifadah* could never do for Kashmir what it did for Palestine, i.e. nearing the moment of deliverance. As long as the situation is volatile in the Indian Kashmir, no Pakistani political party can dare suggest a compromise solution where allegedly one has come so close to a solution by way of unrest. Never mind that such a position would be difficult to follow through, since unrest in the Indian part of Kashmir would probably not bring a solution any closer. Given India's commitment and its military superiority, heightened unrest would rather lead to an open military conflict between Pakistan and India.

The resumption of talks between India and Pakistan in 1997 is once again burdened with the question of who would be seen as soft-paddling on the other. Though Nawaz Sharif seems to be willing to make a fresh start in relations with India, as shown during the Male South Asian summit, he too cannot afford to be seen as 'neglecting' Kashmir.<sup>11</sup> he has to reconcile any opening with India with Pakistan's previous position, making any resumption of the dialogue contingent on focussing first on solution of Kashmir issue. This has been introduced by Benazir as part of her Kashmir campaign. It now holds the Nawaz administration hostage. Restarting talks with India without visible progress in Kashmir is seen as a betrayal of the

Kashmiri radical opposition which still claims its militant campaign continues, although there is less and less evidence of public support for it.<sup>12</sup> A face-saving formula which the Pakistani bureaucracy has devised is the demand for a substantial reduction in the Indian military presence in the Indian Kashmir.<sup>13</sup> This allows Pakistan to be seen as not making unrealistic demands for an instant solution of an intractable problem. Though the Indian Prime Minister Gujral can not afford to accede to this demand at present, it is not unlikely that a compromise on this particular point can be found.

Also in India, references to the grand national discourse are taken when a compromise solution appears to be nearing. India can supposedly not let any part of Kashmir go voluntarily as this questions the secular fabric of Indian society.<sup>14</sup> Also Indian Muslim politicians outside the Kashmir valley favour the continued existence of a Muslim majority state within India for the sake of safeguards for their interests.

Political parties in both countries take refuge in references to the national discourses because they desire to legitimise their claim. Somehow both in Pakistan and India the established parties have difficulty convincing their electorate that they can deliver the goods in terms of performance in the economy, in the social sector etc. their appeal on the sole strength of their current performance is limited. Issues of power influence and political competition get intricately linked with Kashmir issue enhancing the ability of political parties to acquire greater support from the electorate.

The political systems in both countries are rapidly changing, undermining or readjusting the mode of operation of the national discourses. In India, the Congress party is no longer the central force it used to be. Its monolithic dominance has given way to the interplay of a multitude of factors and forces which reflect the growing divergence of the Indian polity. In effect, we have now a three-cornered party system evolving in India. The two main contenders for power are the Indian National Congress and the BJP. A somewhat liberal, socially concerned variant marches under the Congress banner, whereas the BJP plays the part of cultural and social conservatism. Both are more or less wedded to modern economics and capitalism. They also share a varying degree of opportunism in dealing with the electorate in order to bring the party to power or

keep it in power. The third factor is the regional parties, including the United Front components which enter into an alliance with either of them. And very much so at the centre, where the UF government would not exist but for being tolerated by Congress.

In Pakistan, the two-party system of the People's Party and the Muslim League has been weak and unstable. The Muslim League never dominated the Pakistan polity like Congress in India, but it was the military and civil bureaucracy which played the dominant part. A political role for the establishment in Pakistan has been a tradition ever since Ayub Khan's days and it has been institutionalised under Zia. The equation between the establishment and the PPP-Muslim League duo has been inherently unstable, partly because of the weakness of other institutions such as the judiciary and the media, and partly because regional sentiments from the provinces found only reluctant reflection. That national elections of February 1997 have produced a new picture with one party, i.e. the Muslim League, dominating political institutions, no doubt results from the pervasive feeling of failure permeating through the political classes of Pakistan. The failure of political system to function smoothly has largely been attributed to the PPP. yet, looking at the structure of the political camps of the PPP and the Muslim League, a similar pattern emerges like in India. Both 'national' parties gain a credible majority only when they succeed in incorporating strong regional support from the provinces. The re-emergence of a dominant Muslim League is in no way an expression of the longing for a return to the past. It signifies rather the opposite since the new Muslim League successfully appealed to the newly affluent urban classes. Concerns of survival and welfare, of the failure or functioning of the state and its duties towards the people have far outstripped religious concerns of being a good or true Muslim.

Diversification in both, India and Pakistan owes much to the social upheaval and change brought about by economic modernisation and modern-day capitalism. The so-called middle classes have come into existence, perhaps the major social factor disturbing entrenched interests in both countries because they are not willing to take a lack of political and economic culture for granted and they fight back through spontaneous or organised mobilisation. Economic liberalisation and the IMF have become more of a grand discourse for the survival of their governments, for the very survival of society

than their national founding movements. This throws up the question whether Kashmir can still be validly treated in the tradition of the grand discourses of national foundation and liberation or whether it is more relevant to treat it, in the light of the new pressing engagements. These could be somewhat vaguely described in terms of what people expect of their government, and what service it could give them etc. Should differences of opinion on the legal status of Kashmir etc. in the Pakistani and in the Indian Kashmir prevent people from demanding of their respective local governments their legitimate right. On the ground, at grassroot level, the issue seems to be how to stop alienation of the common people from government.

One could also mention here the socio-economic factors partly responsible for the alienation in Kashmir, most prominent among them being the disproportionate growth of numbers of unemployed educated youths. They feel betrayed and, going back to their villages, take up local ethnic and religious issues which they fight out, desperate to negotiate a place for themselves in the fast-changing society, a place otherwise denied to them. This, however, is not limited to Muslim protest movements. Militant student politics played a central role in the Sikh militancy, in Assam, in Bodo extremism.<sup>15</sup> In some of the caste movements, in India and for Pakistan, activities of the *Islami Jamiate Tuleba*, and of the MQM have been most pertinent to sociological arguments for militancy.

In the Indian Kashmir, the number of educated youth with secondary and higher education levels increased from 39 to 67 per thousand between 1971 and 1981. The rise, was much higher for the countryside, as from 18 to 37 or 106%, whereas the overall population growth in J&K was 29.7% during this period.<sup>16</sup> That means the number of educated youths was growing two to three times faster than the whole population, and more so for the countryside. The state administration, fails to accommodate the ever growing number of young graduates. Entrenched interests of groups who control the state administration make it difficult for young people who are not related to these groups to gain access to public service jobs. Both, opening up access to existing jobs and generating new employment become the requirement of the day.

On the other side of the Line of Control, Pakistani Kashmir is known for being fairly backward in its economic development within

the parameters of Pakistan's provinces, falling also well behind the Indian Kashmir. If anything, it was good governance and economic performance that formed the core of the public debate in *AJK*.

One could thus rephrase the correlation that instead of the grand national discourse, Kashmir on both sides of the divide has become part of the socio-political and economic discourses of participation and development.

A third central correlation is that between the Kashmir issue and the cold war or post-cold war polarisation. It is contended here that Kashmir does no longer lend itself to the kind of 'zero sum game' where weakening one side is the gain of the other. It is assumed that the convergence of interests between Pakistan and India is growing in a way where defeating one will also harm the other. The real challenges for the the competition between the political elites of the two countries have moved from Kashmir to other issues which make the Kashmir issue look a rather tame affair.

The cold war and its south Asian diversion was another of the grand old discourses to which Kashmir was frequently related. Because of Pakistan's alliances with the United States and India's connection with the Soviets, both 'superpowers' sharply observed the Kashmir conflict, yet could do little to make use of it or solve it. Both sides strove to keep it from falling to the 'adversary' since it could be used for military installations against the other side. Since the Kashmir conflict was not primarily driven by cold war assumptions, but reflected a regional polarisation, it survived the demise of the global confrontation. So did the 'zero sum game' approach. The cold war brought into prominence a conflict behaviour pattern called the 'zero sum game'. If you scored a point against the other side by weakening it somehow you would believe that this adds to your own strength.

After the end of the cold war, such considerations have lost most of their relevance. Since the Kashmir conflict continued beyond the end of the cold war, some politicians wanted to prolong the zero sum game in relations between India and Pakistan. For South Asia, the zero sum approach implies that India and Pakistan were 'implacable' enemies who could not be reconciled except through the complete victory of one or the total surrender of the other. Their

dissent is supposed to be of existential nature assuming that the two cannot exist side by side but ultimately one of them has to give way to the other. Now it becomes increasingly clear that despite an intermittent heightening of tension on Kashmir and other matters such reasoning receives less and less public backing in both countries. Depicting the other as a threat to your own existence is losing most of its credibility in Pakistan and India.<sup>17</sup> This is probably so because people have understood that other issues and unsolved problems pose a much graver threat to their lives. These include mainly social and economic concerns.

Thinking through the principles of the zero sum game with relation to Kashmir, it becomes obvious that they are not only irrational but also impractical. Based on the assumptions of the zero sum game one would have to ask a number of questions: Is unilateral victory or defeat in Kashmir thinkable without war? Is the defeat of the adversary in Kashmir likely? Is an allout war in Kashmir between India and Pakistan likely or possible today? If answers to these questions raise doubts about the practicality of an 'either/or' approach which excludes compromise, the whole idea of gaining at the other's expense becomes increasingly untenable, from a practical point of view.

Of the many aspects named, the argument to be examined more closely is whether or not ones weakness could add to the others strength in the Kashmir case. The situation as it presents itself today makes this doubtful. Has Pakistan benefited from the insurgency in the Indian Kashmir to which it gave at least moral and political if not material support as is alleged? The logistical support for the insurgency was organised by parties who made no secret of it, like the Jamaat-i-Islami and other organisations. But this logistical support drew on an established network of expertise and training, of proliferation of weapons that has been in existence in Pakistan since the Afghanistan war. It is linked, if one is to believe Pakistan's newspaper commentators, to the *Kalashnikov* culture which spread from Afghanistan to Kashmir, taking advantage of the availability of weapons and money and trained militants ready to serve a cause. This particular *Kalashnikov* culture has heavily undermined the political process in Pakistan. Encouraging a certain type of support for the Kashmir fighters, Benazir has sawed off the branch on which she was sitting because she must have been aware of the destabilis-

ing effects of the logistical support for Kashmir within Pakistan, particularly after the experience with Afghanistan. But apparently considerations of power, control and competition took precedence over such considerations. On this particular count neither Pakistan nor the PPP government have benefited from the events in Kashmir.<sup>18</sup> For Benazir and her PPP, her Kashmir policy may have more likely contributed to her downfall. Even where India blundered considerably that is on the question of human rights abuses in Kashmir, Pakistan was unable to corner India substantially in the international fora. This was attributed by many commentators to the lack of credibility of Pakistan's efforts because of its internal instability and continued bickering between its political forces.

Nor has India been successful in exploiting Pakistan's weakness. Although, as Gujral in his former capacity as Foreign Minister suggested, India assumes that Pakistan has lost the fourth war with India on Kashmir, India cannot draw much comfort from Pakistan's supposed defeat. The absence of a stable political setup in Pakistan prevents it from negotiating the Kashmir issue in seriousness and push a solution through for acceptance. An unstable Pakistan is more for India's politicians to worry about than to expect relief from. A stable, confident and prosperous Pakistan is less likely to engage itself in external conflicts than one seeking some kind of compensation for the problems and the turmoil it seems beset with. The so-called 'Gujral doctrine' aiming at much better relations with India's neighbours, assumes that India can gain much more by granting one or the other concession to its neighbours, most of whom are much smaller than it in terms of size, resources and economic potential, than by bullying them into submission.<sup>19</sup> However, the scope of Gujral doctrine does not extend to Pakistan.

Speaking of the post-cold war allegiances in South Asia, it is also instructive to review the role of the US and how it is viewed in the region. India apparently is still extremely sensitive about continuing US efforts of coalition-building at its expense.<sup>20</sup> It believes as was confirmed to me in talks with people in Delhi who work on South Asia and Central Asia, that, in order to keep a check on Russia with its still mighty nuclear arsenal, the US wants to ensure control over the vital natural resources of Central Asia. For this purpose, it would be ready to give top priority to alternative routes of gas and oil, and one of them is through Afghanistan and Pakistan.<sup>21</sup> U.S. approach

to the Taliban is far more amenable than it would have been otherwise due to the strategy outlined above<sup>22</sup>. Here also the US is seen as encouraging Pakistan's forays into Central Asia which would then sort of rebuild the US-Pakistan axis. Against this background, US activity on Kashmir is viewed with suspicion in India.<sup>23</sup>

Yet again, is this contention valid, and what does it imply? This assumption does not consider the internal compulsions of US policy which for them have become the overriding concern after the end of the cold war. In the US, the central demand is to keep a check on all possible situations from which the deployment of nuclear weapons can arise. Instead of waiting for things to settle on their own, active diffusion of tension is thought necessary in order to reduce the incentive to keep the nuclear arsenal. This is probably the major reason why the US has become active on Kashmir. Though the US may still have some interest in the region tied to its competition with Russia, Kashmir does not look to be wedded to this issue any further. That is why the US went out of its way to impress upon Pakistan the necessity of tolerating the elections in the Indian Kashmir. US ambassador to India, Wisner, visited Pakistan and talked to civil and military officials, a step quite unusual from the point of view of protocol.

Another interesting aspect of the attitude of outside powers towards Kashmir is shown by Britain. It is rather the potential electoral support from Mirpur migrants for the Labour on Conservatives which explains the dithering and withering of a clearnet British position, an issue far divorced from international polarisation.<sup>24</sup> These two examples may suffice to show that also in the international field, Kashmir does no longer lend itself to interpretation in terms of any overarching global or regional polarisation. Other factors, mostly domestic considerations, increasingly govern the politics of external powers on issues like Kashmir.

Is the ongoing competition between India and Pakistan likely to be decided on or by Kashmir? The scenarios discussed demonstrate the extent to which the grand old discourses have begun to unravel. It is argued here that the major challenge to either side is how it succeeds in adapting its economy and its polity to the consequences of economic, financial and cultural globalisation. The recent political upheavals in India and Pakistan have made one thing clear. People

want their governments to perform, they want transparency of power and decision-making, social justice in distribution of resources, they want opportunities offered by deregulated markets with the social consequences firmly under control. They want clean politics, effective social services and greater say in decision-making. The challenge posed by Indian mass culture icons like films TV-shows, music, private satellite television etc is real. Attempts to keep out Indian economic and cultural influences would become more difficult and look rather bizarre.<sup>25</sup> These challenges, though far from certain at the moment, look more fundamental than the conventional threat of a military conflict over Kashmir or the size of the defence budget.

To summarise observations, it is argued that firstly, the dynamics of the Kashmir situation are largely determined by the situation in the Indian Kashmir. To what extent people confer legitimacy on the state government there largely depends on their alienation from or association with governance. India's major parties Congress and the BJP will have to let Kashmir go as a sphere of influence in order to keep Kashmir. Otherwise they will cut at the roots of elective democracy and coexistence of different religious and ethnic cultures in India.

Secondly, as long as Pakistan's political parties continue to compete with each other for power on issues like Kashmir, rather than on issues of performance in office, a solution of the Kashmir conflict will elude them and they will continue to encourage forces which at least at present cut at the very roots of the party system and elective democracy.

Thirdly, a formal solution of the Kashmir conflict appears more unlikely than ever, if only for the reason that no stable governments are likely to assume power in India or Pakistan any time soon. The focus will invariably shift to the performance of economic and political institutions in both parts of Kashmir as well as in India and Pakistan as a whole. The best both India and Pakistan can hope to achieve is governance truly for the people, thus fighting alienation and strengthening support in Kashmir as well as in their countries as a whole. This may well also be the best deal for the people of Jammu and Kashmir who have lived so far through so many upheavals and reversals.

If theoretical interpretations were required, it seems appropriate to think of the effect of globalisation on the mutation of conflict configurations. Post-modernist influences on politics will leave an impact on the future of grand discourses. Of the three types of correlations mentioned, only the local (abiding influence of internal stability in Indian Kashmir) continues to hold true, whereas the national and the regional/international discourses have undergone significant modification.

#### REFERENCES AND NOTES

1. On the human and material cost of the war in Kashmir, see, for instance, critical figures published in Inida, stating that since 1988 about 1,800 army men, 13,000 civilians, 7,000 militants, including about 400 foreigners mostly from Afghanistan, were killed, close to 25,000 militants were caught, while another 2,500 surrendered. The weapons confiscated are enough to arm more than one infantry division. The civilian property destroyed till January 1996 included over six-hundred educational institutions, six hospitals, almost 8,500 private houses, more than 300 bridges, roughly 1,200 each shops and government buildings. Dinesh Kumar, 'Kashmir: The high cost of low-intensity warfare,' in *The Times of India*, October 28, 1996.
2. As per figures, handed out by the Indian Army, the incidents of violence had been markedly reduced over September and October. While there had been 438 incidents in September, the figure came down to 247 in October. The army talks about 3,000-odd local militants of which roughly 25 percent were believed to be active after elections, although regrouping in Jungles and hideouts. Particularly hope was placed on people coming forward now with information about the militants which would be more authentic than before. The army, however, ruled out any reduction of forces in the Indian Kashmir in the near future. (*The Tribune*, Chandigarh, November 13, 1996)
3. 'Crossfire,' in *India Today*, August 31, 1991, pp.49ff.
4. 'Kashmir Coalition: Will it work?' in *India Today*, November 30, 1986.
5. See, for instance, Darshan Singh Maini, 'Kashmir's triple alienation', in *Hindustan Times*, November 15, 1996: 'The New Delhi rulers have at last been pushed to the point where they must 'deviate into honesty' for the survival of the democratic

experiment in Kashmir. They just cannot afford to regress into the past fixations', allergies and inequities if only because the nightmare may yet return to mock the illusory victory, a victory which to the cynics still strikes as 'phyrric'. See also Amrik Singh, 'At the crossroads,' in *ibid.*, November 12, 1996. Also, Nikhil Chakravarty, 'The J and K verdict,' in *The Hindu*, October 5, 1996: 'There is now no alibi for the Central Government to withhold or delay the promised autonomy for Jammu and Kashmir'.

6. Pakistan controls 78,114 sq km or roughly one-third of the territory of the former principality of Jammu and Kashmir of which Azad Kashmir makes up only 13,297 sq km.
7. Mohammad Anwar Khan, chairman of the Jammu and Kashmir Peace Committee, warned the Pakistani Caretaker Government that if the Kashmir conflict 'is left hanging for long, the people of Azad Kashmir would be left with no option but to revert back to the pre-partition position and ask the Indian Election Commission to extend jurisdiction across the line of control'. *The Times of India*, Lucknow, November 25, 1996.
8. Donna Bryson from Associated Press pointed to a UN study of government spending for 1990-1995, which found 'Pakistan devoted just 1 percent of its budget to health and 2 percent to education, while 31 percent went to the military. In much more populous India, health and education each got 2 percent and the military got 15 percent'. She quotes a Pakistani scholar, Tariq Rehman, who insists that fear of India must be overcome in Pakistan, and who maintains that Pak-Indian relations are part of the development issue. He argues 'if we were to take money from defense and spend it on development, it could mean a lot for the entire region', a view, fairly representative of a growing section of public opinion in Pakistan. *India News Network Digest*, Wednesday, 26 Mar 97, Volume 2 : Issue 1567.  
The new Foreign Minister of the Nawaz administration, Gohar Ayub, is reported to have stated that India and Pakistan should halt their 'mad arms-race' over Kashmir and divert military funds for welfare. He also said that recent talks between the two sides were the beginning of efforts to resolve Kashmir dispute. *Dawn*, April 29, 1997.
9. The last occasion Benazir articulated this formula most prominently was when addressing Islamic countries at the United Nations on October 2, 1996, *Dawn*, October 3, 1996.

10. This sordid state of affairs was for instance heavily decried by Mohammad Ali Syed in his commentary 'Trade with India: addressing the fears' for the *Dawn* of January 12, 1996, where he argued 'It is clear that a lot has changed since the patriotic days of Partition. Our leaders' support for the Kashmiri people may not be motivated completely by an altruistic desire to alleviate their suffering'.
11. 'Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub Khan has asked India to acknowledge the existence of a bilateral dispute over Kashmir, saying such a move is key to improving relations. Mr. Khan was quoted by the Times of India on Monday as dismissing suggestions in the Indian media that the Kashmir issue could be put on hold in order to allow the arch-foes to resolve less intractable disputes first. He said he had raised the issue with Indian Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral when the two met in New Delhi earlier this month. Gujral was India's foreign minister at that time'. *Dawn*, April 29, 1997.
12. Before talks with India took place, Pakistan's Foreign Minister Gohar Ayub took care to elicit the opinion of the major moderate Kashmiri organization operating in the Indian Kashmir, the *All Party Hurriyat Conference* (APHC). At a meeting on April 6, 1997, the APHC leaders, although supporting talks between Pakistan and India, stressed that 'before initiating talks with the Indian government, or taking any major diplomatic initiative for the Kashmir cause', the people of Kashmir must be taken into confidence. *News*, April 7, 1997.
13. After the first summit meeting in three years between the Pakistani Prime Minister and his Indian counterpart in Male on May 12, 1997, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Shamshad Ahmed, while talking to the Press stressed that 'Nawaz raised Pakistan's concerns about the number of Indian soldiers and paramilitary troops in Kashmir'. Reuter, *India News Network Digest*, Tuesday, 13 May 97, Volume 2 : Issue 1616.
14. When visiting Jammu on April 27, 1997 shortly after taking office, Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral ruled out converting the line of control, dividing Jammu and Kashmir between India and Pakistan, into a permanent border between the two countries as a solution to the Kashmir issue: "The question does not arise.' (*Hindustan Times*, April 28, 1997) Addressing the Rajya Sabha on May 8, 1997, shortly before the Male summit, he assured the House 'that whatever doctrine we adopt, the issue of

security and integrity of India is non-negotiable. India's interest will be safeguarded. This is my primary duty and it is fully and firmly upheld.' (*Hindustan Times*, May 9, 1997).

15. See, for instance, the Leader on 'The latest Bodo threat', in *The Sentinel*, Guwahati, November 9, 1996.
16. Tabulated on the basis of Census of India, 1971 and 1981, Series 8, Jammu and Kashmir, Social and Cultural Tables.
17. For Pakistan, such view has been expressed, for instance, by Senator Ajmal Khattak, chief of the *Awami National Party*, who said in an interview that the 'Kashmir dispute cannot be resolved in the battle field. The issue, besides other mutual problems persisting between the two neighbors, can only be resolved on the negotiation table. Both the countries should reconsider their stand and try to bring about positive change in their stance over this important issue in the best interest of their people.' *Dawn*, January 28, 1997. The ANP is a junior coalition partner with the governing Muslim League. For India, the positive attitude of Inder Kumar Gujral, both as former Foreign Minister and present Prime Minister, and of Sheikh Abdullah has effected a remarkable shift in public opinion.
18. In this connection, Mohammad Ali Syed mentions another disadvantage of tension in Kashmir, in that it strengthens the hands of the military: '... Our current stand on Kashmir causes enmity with India, and necessitates excessive military spending. The only thing that excessive military spending will help in doing, is in securing the generals of the army and undeservedly large role in national politics and a free hand in obstructing democracy at their whim. Maybe their aversion to allow democracy to flourish in urban Sindh and disruption of liberties of Karachite's flow from the expanded role they have acquired. What business do the armed forces have in dominating politics? The army will never want Pakistan to be friendly with India, because its reason for existence will be questioned, and it will not be able to take the huge chunk that it does from our hard earned national revenues. And reliance on military solutions to our security problems in the absence of genuine political and economic endeavours will only help us to the extent that it has helped us in the past (to be precise, not help us at all). In any case, to feel safe we need strong friends not strong enemies.' *Dawn*, January 12, 1996.
19. Cf. the systemic and formal study by Kishore C. Dash of the

variables of domestic support, weak governments and regional cooperation in South Asia. Kishore C. Dash, 'Domestic support, weak governments, and regional cooperation: a case study of South Asia.' in *Contemporary South Asia*, Oxford 1997, Vol. 6, No.1, pp.57-77.

20. See also the article on virtues and disadvantages of anti-Americanism by India where the author argues that instead of shallow and unprincipled anti-Americanism as seen on the debate over nuclear proliferation and the CTBT, which India not only refused to sign considering it discriminatory and unfair, a principled and consistent anti-Americanism was required. Achin Vanaik, 'Indian Anti-Americanism,' in *The Hindustan Times*, November 1, 1996.
21. Commodore Uday Bhaskar from the Delhi Institute of Defence Studies and Analyses, comments that 'The Cold War came to the region and the subsequent weakening of the Afghan state by a combination of forces: religious fundamentalism, state-sponsored terrorism, narcotics and small arms - the FUNTERNARSA factor - funneled by the US through the Pakistani ISI conduit need little reiteration.' He believes that the emergence of political forces on the Indian periphery whose own fortunes are linked to the FUNTERNARSA factor, to which he apparently links the Taliban, and the possibility of India being marginalised by these forces would be of considerable concern to India. Pointing out that oil and gas reserves in Central Asia either match or surpass the Gulf, he stresses that 'this entire region has become of late the focus of the post-cold war world geopolitical interests with the economic and energy dimensions.' (C Uday Bhaskar, 'Strategic Contours of Afghan Imbroglio,' in *The Time of India*, November 5, 1996).
22. For confirmation of a continued dialogue between US representatives and the Taliban, see the daily briefing by Nicholas Burns, spokesman of the Department of State, on October 3, 1996, p.15, at the Internet archive of the DoS at [www.state.gov](http://www.state.gov). The Pakistani Press made random references that the US courted the Taliban in order to induce them to close training camps for militants on territory under their control, Badr I and II, and rein in their inmates, for which a tacit tolerance of their advance in Afghanistan might have been traded. On the assumed US support for the Taliban, see also Inder Malhotra, 'Takeover in Kabul: Grim implications for the region,' (*The Tribune*, Chand-

igarh, October 8): 'The capture of Kabul and the apparent advance of the Taliban further north serve America's grand strategy which is to detach the former Central Asian republics of the Soviet Union from Russia's almost exclusive influence at present. For this it is absolutely necessary to have an access to Central Asia from the south. Since Iran is sought to be isolated and 'contained' by the USA a land route across Afghanistan and Pakistan to the ports on the Indian Ocean is vital. The victory of the Pakistan-backed Taliban in Afghanistan is, therefore, welcome to America.' Also: 'Dealing with Iran,' in *The Hindustan Times*, October 21, 1996.

23. India is similarly weary of any multilateral approach to solving the Kashmir and the nuclear issue, rejecting recently another attempt by Pakistan through a memorandum in the First Committee of the UN General Assembly, to convene a regional conference on peace and security, arms control and nuclear issues in the sub-continent. News comments mentioned that India was 'unwilling to accept any big power-dictated solutions on what are essentially bilateral issues.' (*The Indian Express*, Delhi, November 13, 1996)
24. When Shadow Foreign Secretary of the Labour Party, Robin Cook, visited Pakistan and India in November 1996, he issued separate, and visibly different statements in the two countries. A Labour councillor critical of his party said, 'They talk to the Pakistanis about the support to a plebiscite in their NEC resolution and they tell the Indians that the resolution also speaks of the Shimla accord.' (*The Pioneer*, Delhi, November 9, 1996) To everyone's surprise, Mr. Cook spoke of a role for Britain as 'the former imperial power.' (*Ibid.*) *The Hindustan Times* commented 'The general brief is that Mr. Cook, like several other British MPs, is sensitive to the opinion of many of the voters who were once Pakistanis, (*The Hindustan Times*, Delhi, November 12, 1996)
25. For some time now, in Pakistan a demand has been made to link trade with India to an amicable solution of Kashmir dispute. See for instance, *News*, January 2, 1996: 'The acting Prime Minister of Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK) has stressed the need to link opening of liberal trade with India to an amicable solution of the Kashmir problem. 'The linkage implies that India would be interested in trade with Pakistan to such an extent that it would be ready to make concessions on Kashmir. Since trad-

ing with Pakistan does not seem to have this overarching, existential importance for India, this linkage is more likely to have resulted from seeking continued protection of Pakistan's industry against Indian competition.