

REPORT



**Islamabad
Policy Institute**

Supporting Dialogue for Peace & Development

The Kashmir Conflict & South Asian Security

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Report- The Kashmir Conflict & South Asian Security



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**Islamabad Policy Institute
Pakistan**

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INTRODUCTION:

The unresolved Kashmir dispute is the defining factor in the bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. Since the partition of the sub-continent, Kashmir issue has been described as the unfinished agenda of the partition of India. The geo-political and socio-economic dimensions have added to the complexity of the conflict. Kashmir is not only a territorial conflict but also affects regional peace and security. Kashmir conflict is characterized as a nuclear tinderbox by many analysts.

Tension between India and Pakistan has grown more perilous since India scrapped the autonomous status for Occupied Kashmir enshrined in Article 370 of (India's) Constitution and bifurcated the occupied region into two separate Union territories – Muslim majority Jammu and Kashmir and Buddhist dominated Ladakh.

India's growing bellicosity manifested in its military modernization plan, ceasefire violations across the LoC coupled with threats of use of nuclear weapon and India's water politics endanger the regional stability and national security of Pakistan.

In this regard Islamabad Policy Institute (IPI) organized a seminar on "The Kashmir Conflict & South Asian Security" in collaboration with Quaid-e-Azam University's Department of Defense and Strategic Studies (DSS). The seminar was held on October 22, 2019 at seminar room of the Department of Defense and Strategic Studies (DSS), Quaid-e-Azam University, Islamabad. The event had been organized to bring together leading academicians, policy makers, military officials, young scholars and students so that they could exchange views and enhance their understanding of emerging security and threat matrix of the region. The Panel included Dr. Salma Malik (Assistant Professor, DSS, QAU), Dr. Nasrullah Mirza, (Assistant Professor, DSS, QAU) and Dr Shabana Fayyaz, incharge DSS chaired the session. President Azad Jammu & Kashmir, H.E. Sardar Masood Khan was the chief guest and also delivered the Keynote address. Executive Director IPI Prof Sajjad Bokhari welcomed the chief guest H.E. Sardar Masood Khan, Professor Dr. Muhammad Ali, Vice Chancellor, QAU, speakers and guests in his opening remarks. The discussion was followed by the Question and Answers session.

KEY POINTS OF PRESENTATION

Inaugural Session:

Professor Sajjad Bokhari

Executive Director Islamabad Policy Institute

- Denial of self-determination for Kashmir in 1947 continues to have consequences until today. The situation deteriorated further when BJP government inspired and motivated by its ideological fountainhead, the Hindu fascist RSS, illegally and unconstitutionally annexed Occupied Kashmir on August 5 and intensified its brutal repression of the local population.
- India's ruthless actions including arrests of thousands of activists and politicians, imposition of curfew and blackout of the internet and phone lines only served to further inflame the resentment against Indian Occupation. There has been little change in the situation in the Valley ever since the lockdown was imposed, even though India is desperately trying to mislead the

world that the situation is returning to normalcy.



- And while there is this humanitarian angle in which nearly 8 million Kashmiris are facing outright repression, and violation of basic human rights amidst strong discontentment amongst the Kashmiris, Indian move has serious implications for peace and security for the region. The situation is not just problematic because two nuclear states are toe to toe, but it is particularly

worrisome because of India's hegemonic designs, its pursuance of offensive military doctrines, nuclear blackmail, rejection of proposals for strategic restraint, and refusal to follow the path of dialogue for resolving outstanding issues.

- Ceasefire violations along the Line of Control and the Working Boundary, which have witnessed a dramatic spike over the past few years especially since 2017 keep reminding us about how perilous the security situation is. We just witnessed some major ceasefire violations over the past couple of days in which several citizens and a soldier were martyred.
- The situation is gradually drifting towards a major escalation, if urgent steps are not taken to manage the conflict and subsequently move towards conflict

resolution. We must appreciate that Pakistan government has done remarkably well in projecting the Kashmir dispute at the international forums. The need of the time is to make the United States and other strategic and economic partners of India exert more pressure on New Delhi to give up its inflexibility and engage with Pakistan for finding a solution to this very complicated problem.

Professor Dr. Muhammad Ali

Vice Chancellor

Quaid-e-Azam University

Vice Chancellor Quaid-e-Azam University

Prof. Dr. Muhammad Ali condemned the atrocities being committed by the Indian forces in Indian Occupied Kashmir and reaffirmed support for the suffering Kashmiris. He welcomed the President Azad Jammu & Kashmir Sardar Masood Khan, Executive Director IPI, Prof. Sajjad Bokhari, worthy speakers and participants.



Keynote Address

H.E. Sardar Masood Khan

President Azad Jammu & Kashmir

- There are four factors which are currently imperiling security of South Asia.
- i. The ongoing turbulence in the India Occupied Kashmir (IOK). India not only illegally annexed and bifurcated the occupied territory on August 05, but it also embarked upon a path to colonize the state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) which, until then, was enjoying special privileges guaranteed under the Articles 35-A and 370 of the Indian Constitution. IOK is, since then, facing grave human rights violations. The humanitarian crisis which unfolded in the wake of India's unconstitutional actions in the Valley is becoming grim with every passing day. Kashmiri women are being told that 'you are our property' and are brazen-facedly presented as the 'spoils-of-war', there are hideous midnight raids, streets are being deserted, complete communication blackout has been imposed and, horrifyingly, many recent reports claim that as many as 13,000 young Kashmiri men have been incarcerated.
- ii. The gravity of the illegal and unconstitutional steps taken by India on August 05 have jeopardized the overall security of not only Kashmir, but also of the entire region. By

beefing up the army presence in the Valley from 700,000 to 900,000



troops, India further militarized Held Valley, which was already the most militarized region in the world. India has bifurcated the Indian-administered Kashmir by separating Ladakh from the Valley and, illegally reducing the status of the Municipalities, now both directly controlled by New Delhi.

- iii. India's blatant threat to colonize the region is also posing grave risks to the security of the Held Kashmir and its citizens. The Kashmiris had been given special privileges under the Articles 35-A and 370 of the Indian Constitution. This special status of Kashmir has been revoked and, the Kashmiris will be at the mercy of New Delhi for their basic human rights. The Valley will become vulnerable to land grabbing from all over India, particularly by the Hindus. This will drastically change the demography of Kashmir reducing Kashmiri Muslims to a minority.

There are both reports and statements, particularly made by Indian policy makers, that India is

seeking a fully-fledged war with Pakistan with its sole aim to dismember Pakistan. India believes that present Pakistan belongs to it as it is reinforced by their “Akhand Baharat” concept which means “Undivided India” in Sanskrit.

- iv. There is a looming threat of nuclear catastrophe initiated by India. Recent statements made by both Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and his Defence Minister Rajnath Singh are, undeniably, blatant and irresponsible. They have threatened to wage a nuclear attack on Pakistan by reinforcing their commitment to renounce the no first use (NFU) policy, which refers to ‘a pledge or a policy by a nuclear power not to use nuclear weapons as a means of warfare unless first attacked by an adversary using nuclear weapons’. All this madness gives credence to the fact that the incumbent government of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) is using ‘Hindutva’ agenda to further its neo-fascist political aspirations backed by the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh (RSS), Bajrang Dal, Vishva Hindu Parishad and many other extremist organisations. These organisations believe that India would never become a pure land unless it is purged of all other religions particularly Muslims and, to some extent Christians and Sikhs also. The ongoing Kashmir crisis also is one of the stepping stones to achieve the dream of ‘Akhand Bharat’.

- The situation has been made to go from bad to worse because of the forceful conversion of Muslims into Hinduism through a systematic drive carried out by extremist organizations linked to the incumbent government of India. Equally dismal is the situation of Muslims being brutally lynched by Hindu vigilante mobs in the name of so-called cow protection ‘Gao Rakhsha’. It is a direct assault on Indian Muslims. Moreover, they have also started a campaign to revoke the citizenships of Muslims who migrated from neighbouring states into India. More than 1.9 million Muslims were stripped of their citizenship when the Modi-led BJP government introduced the controversial new National Register of Citizens (NRC) there. It also exacerbated the security of entire South Asia.
- All these acts remind one of the fascist policies pursued by Mussolini and Hitler in the last century. The world’s reaction to the illegal annexation of Kashmir by India is similar to the Munich Agreement

signed in 1938 by Nazi Germany, the United Kingdom, the French Third Republic, and the Kingdom of Italy. The agreement provided annexation by Germany of the Sudeten German territory of Czechoslovakia. Later on, it emboldened Hitler to wreak havoc on the Jewish minority by calling them aliens and an existential threat to Germans and their state. It provided a brazen pretext to Hitler to rationalize Jewish genocide in Europe. Prime Minister Modi is steadfastly treading the same path once followed by Nazi Germany under Adolf Hitler.

- In a nutshell, ongoing crisis in the Held Kashmir is the outcome of India's denial of right to self-determination to the Kashmiris. In the wake of illegal annexation of J&K by India, people from all over Pakistan have risen like a 'one solid rock'. It is unprecedentedly unique to witness such unity as in the case of solidarity expressed with the people of J&K.

- International media for the very first time in the history has highlighted the grave human rights violations in IOK. Soon after the unlawful annexation of J&K by India, Pakistan garnered the support of leaders of the world powers by intensifying its diplomatic outreach. The timely action of Pakistan was appreciated by the Kashmiris all over the world. India, despite unlawfully muzzling voices of the Kashmiris, could not restrict their plights from reaching and echoing in every nook and corner of the world. One of the major diplomatic achievements of Pakistan is the internationalisation of the Kashmir conflict which was long painted by India as a bilateral issue. The entire world has taken note of brutal acts of Indian army in IOK. The European, the British, and French Parliaments have held debates on the Kashmir crisis. It augurs extremely well as far as the Kashmir cause is concerned. Some members of the EP have, surprisingly, demanded the imposition of strictest sanctions on India for its high-handedness in J&K. Likewise,

more than 50 Congressmen including several Senators in the United States (US) have written letters to President Donald Trump demanding intervention to save the people of J&K from genocide by ruthless Indian army.

- India, in the past decades, has cunningly managed to silence the voices of the oppressed populace of J&K, particularly in the Western Hemisphere. This is the very first time when the entire world along with international media is showing its concerns on J&K. The modern world is starting to acknowledge, albeit lately, that crisis in J&K has humanitarian dimensions where the right to self-determination is forcefully suppressed by the occupant forces.
- The nuclear dimension of the Kashmir crisis is also posing grave threats to peace and stability of the region. There is a great possibility of a conflict spiraling to strategic level as both countries have nuclear weapons. Millions of lives are

vulnerable to a potential nuclear catastrophe in the wake of ongoing crisis in the Held Kashmir. Our region which is home to more than 2.5 billion of the world population would be exposed to extreme weather patterns, refugee issues, severe food crisis and global recession. It would be a nuclear apocalypse, if things go to that stage.

- Everyone must bear in mind that a threat to IOK is a direct and existential threat to Pakistan. India has been investing heavily in proxy wars against Pakistan. In the wake of August 05, India is trying to intensify its proxy wars in Pakistan with its sole aim to divide Pakistan. The operations in Kashmir are the beginning of a series of a steps that India has planned against Pakistan.
- It is the need of the hour to maintain the unity achieved in the wake of India's August 05 action. There should be no fissures in Pakistan. All Pakistan must be on the same page.
- The bilateral process with India has been a mirage. It was not only unproductive, rather it was counter-productive and it helped India

project the dispute as a bilateral matter excluding people of Kashmir and UN from the process. Now Pakistan is also being excluded after annexation of Kashmir and the problem is being projected by India as its internal matter. In this way India has now moved its narrative on Kashmir from that of a 'bilateral issue' to an 'internal matter'.

- All these matters have convinced Pakistan to explore international avenues in search of a permanent solution of Kashmir issue. Pakistan must build pressure on the international community by the echoing plight of Kashmiris. There should be intense lobbying at international organizations. We should seek solutions not just solidarity.
- Rallies, processions and demonstrations organized by the overseas Pakistanis and Kashmiris have played a significant role in highlighting Indian atrocities in the Held Valley. But, it is time to move forward from protest

demonstrations to influence decision making and get solutions.

- There has been a reaction from within India to the revocation of Article 370 and the security crackdown. It is important to interface with those voices in India.
- Pakistan must invest heavily in GB and Azad Kashmir since a strong and stable Pakistan is the only guarantee of success on Kashmir.
- The think tanks should come up with a strategy to outmaneuver India. Such a strategy may include military dimension, economic development, national unity, and plans for becoming an effective strategic competitor.
- Arab League has regrettably been silent on Kashmir issue and at least two Arab governments have awarded PM Modi. The overall reaction of Muslim countries has by and large been a mixed one. Kashmiris are not happy with the Arab world's silence. We may, however, take comfort from the fact that the common people in Arab countries are with Kashmir even though their governments may have

opted for silence out of their compulsions.

- We must have solid planning for future. The nation should be fully prepared for an imminent war with India. It is pointless to engage India bilaterally. Therefore, greater focus must be put on pursuing the multilateral track.

Dr. Salma Malik

Assistant Professor

Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, QAU, Islamabad

Dr, Salma Malik made a presentation on the topic “Kashmir: Exploiting the strategic fault lines”.

- She observed that the complexity of the issue has the potential to detract stakeholders and those seeking conflict resolution from the main issue, which is the humanitarian dimension of the conflict and the plight of people of Kashmir, who are struggling for their fundamental humanitarian and democratic rights.
- Notwithstanding the fact that Pakistan and the international community at large do not recognize India's constitutional rights over Kashmir due to its internationally recognized disputed status, India's unilateral revocation of Articles 370 and 35-A dealing with the special status of Kashmir and the state subject rule is clear departure from Ambedkar's vision, who was the main architect of the Indian constitution. Indian actions reflect

India's clear disregard for UN



resolutions on Kashmir issue especially because India was the first to take the issue to the UN.

- Regular cease fire violations and the current combustible environment offers a bleak picture of human rights, stability and peace. She also highlighted the significance and challenges of Kashmir issue as to how it influences and is being influenced by other issues like Siachen, Sir Creek, thus complicating the security environment.
- Talking of the international community's role on Kashmir she enquired about the nature of foreign intervention in the matter as to whether it would suit the Kashmiris or for that matter Pakistan's vision for the settlement of Kashmir issue.

- Emphasis on Kashmir as a nuclear flashpoint may help gain international attention but it remains limited to conflict management and not the resolution of Kashmir dispute. She opined that such a narrow focusing undermined or overshadowed the more important humanitarian situation which has been worsening for the last 70 years.

Dr. Muhammad Nasrullah Mirza

Assistant Professor

Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, QAU, Islamabad

Dr. Muhammad Nasrullah Mirza addressed three key points in his presentation: Firstly, Modi's threats of water war and hydro-politics; secondly, the nature of relations between riparian states; and thirdly, he the efficacy of Indus Water Treaty (IWT) 1960.

- **Modi's threats of water war**

Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi while resorting to water threats to Pakistan states that "I always do what I promise': Modi warned Pakistan that he's serious about using 100% of Indian river waters "The water over which Haryana's farmers have the right will not flow to Pakistan now." Pakistan's Foreign Office's Spokesman, Dr. M. Faisal responded: "Any attempt by India to divert the flows of these rivers will be considered an act of aggression and Pakistan has the right to respond." Modi on Friday 19 Oct. 2019 promised to invest 3.5 lakh crore rupees (3500 Bn) over the next five years to beef up irrigation systems in the state along with diverting river waters.

For better understanding of Modi's threats

to Pakistan, Dr. Mirza described hydro-



politics in details. He maintained that it relates to systematic analysis of interstate conflict and cooperation regarding international/trans-boundary water resources. It also relates to the control or exploitation of water resources by an upstream riparian, which may be detrimental to the existing and planned uses and needs of the lower riparian. With control of the flow of ravine, an upper riparian possesses a lot of political clout to influence the politics, economy and security by controlling the development of downstream in the basin, especially where the basin is predominantly arid agrarian economy or is dependent on hydro-power as a major source of energy.

- **Nature of relations between Riparian States**

While explaining nature of relations between Riparian States, he stated that there are three types of riparian zones:

- i) *An Upper Riparian State* adheres to the claim of absolute territorial sovereignty which means it can take any desired course of action within its territorial boundaries and its authority is absolute over any water course which flows within its territory, even though if it terminates in another country.
- ii) A Lower Riparian State demands absolute territorial integrity which means that an upper riparian state may not indulge in a practice injurious to lower riparian state with regards to trans-boundary water resources.
- iii) Middle Riparian State propagates resource community which means cooperation amongst the riparian states in treating the whole river basin as a single and integrated unit.

- **Facts about Indus Basin and efficacy of Indus Water Treaty**

In the third part of the presentation, Dr.Mirza briefly explained the few facts about Indus Basin and efficacy of Indus Water Treaty. The Indus River System is the source for the largest contiguous irrigation system in the world, with a command area of 20 million hectares and an annual irrigation capacity of over 12 million hectares (Swain, 2004) with involvement of 60% labour force contributing 23% of GDP. Although the main source of the Indus River is located in China (Tibet), the headwaters /catchment area of the basin lie in India but the bulk of the command/irrigated area falls in Pakistan (Jaitly,2009).Glacial area of the Upper Indus is around 22,500 sqkm, where 3-4 meters of snow falls every year. The Upper Indus catchment contains some of the largest glaciers of the world outside Polar Regions. Consequently question arises that what happened to Kashmir? India tried to capture it in October 1947, India succeeded in occupying 45% of Kashmir territory. Public of Kashmir (Tribal Areas) checked its advances. India used water as economic, political and military weapon against Pakistan in April 1948. Pakistan realizing Indian intentions

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in May 1948 responded to secure its water resources and secured (35%) part of Kashmir. In 1962, China captured Aksai Chin, part of Tibet - a disputed territory between India and China - and in 1963 Pakistan ceded to China territory beyond K2; 20% J&K is under China's control.

While further highlighting the facts about Indus basin he added, Indus River System (IRS) comprises six rivers: Indus and its five tributaries: Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutleg. Average annual flow of pre-partition Indus Rivers System was 168.3 MAF (89.5 MAF from Indus at Kalabagh, 22.6MAF from Jhelum at Mangla, 23.5 MAF from Chenab at Marala, 6.4 MAF from Ravi at Madhopur, 12.7 MAF from Beas at Mandi Plain and 13.5 MAF from Sutlej at Rupar Head Work (Malik, 2011). After signing of IWT 1960 Pakistan was left with 145 MAF of water but later due to Indian dam frenzy in J&K average water flow is between 104 to 114 MAF. Above 75 MAF is used for agriculture, 35 MAF is mismanaged and another 35 MAF is being wasted into the sea every year (Ahmad, 2000). Out of the Indus Basin's 1.14 million sq km area, 52% is in Pakistan, 34% is in India and 14% lies in China and

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Afghanistan (UNEP, 2002). The Indus Waters Treaty (IWT) is a bilateral pact between India and Pakistan; neither China as upper-most riparian nor Afghanistan as upper riparian to Pakistan (Kabul River contributing 20% to Indus flow) has been taken on board (Briscoe, 2010), • J&K is headwaters/catchment area of 4 out of 6 rivers of the IRS comprising: The Indus, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas and Sutleg.

• **The Puzzle Game**

The Puzzle game is that literature on India-Pakistan relations primarily projected the Kashmir tangle as an issue of conflicting ideologies and identity politics. The puzzle that what compelled Pakistan to surrender to India the international rivers, originating from Kashmir territory, but why both never compromised on Kashmir.

Kashmir is located in high mountains and valleys (from more than 8000 meters above sea level to 1000 meters at the foothills), north of the peaks drains into China, remaining drains into Pakistan. Kashmir is the territory where water resources can be developed and preserved, as average water fall is 30 ft/km in Kashmir compared to less than 1 ft/km in Pakistan. The melting of snows and high summer precipitation in Kashmir valleys is the only

source which feeds the entire IRS and gives it a status of life-line of the agrarian, flat and arid Pakistan. Having a glance over map clears-up the puzzle.

Between India and Pakistan boundaries were drawn to have access to water resources. Water was used as economic, political and military weapon and territories were captured and are retained to control water resources. Thus the study proves empirically that the Kashmir and Indus disputes are intertwined in nature and have strong linkages with war and peace in the region.

• Conclusion

Dr. Mirza in his concluding remarks stated that water is a cause of conflict but can also be a catalyst for peace, depending upon the geography of the conflict and nature of relations between the riparian. Upon reaching a mutually hurting-stalemate, even enduring rivals accommodate each other. The rivalry between India and Pakistanis is no exception to this reality, but the dissection and diversion of a single and geographically integrated river system under the IWT has intensified divisive politics in the region and conferred permanency to the mistrust between the two parties. As neither the political

leadership nor public were taken into confidence at the time of signing of the IWT, which has given rise to one of the major causes of Kashmiris' alienation from India and also to some extent from Pakistan, on the one hand, and inter-provincial disharmony in Pakistan on the other. Moreover, it stalled further development of water resources in the Basin since 1970s in Pakistan but India in Kashmir and Punjab has developed and is continuously developing water resources. Subsequently, the situation is further complicated by the fact that India has a series of hydropower projects with variable storage capacities being planned, designed and constructed on the headwaters of Pakistan's three western rivers which will create something like 40 days of live storage on the Chenab alone; this ability to hold and release water at India's will constitutes a serious threat to water security in Pakistan; both in war and peace time alike (Briscoe,2010). More so India can divert complete flow of Chenab River by developing Marhu tunnel.

Closing Remarks

Dr. Shabana Fayyaz

Head of Department Defence and Strategic Studies

In her closing remarks Dr. Fayyaz called for pursuing a multi-pronged strategy on Kashmir in which international community should be engaged more effectively, peace lobbies within India should be contacted, Pakistan be made stronger through better governance and improved economy, national consensus and unity be strengthened. Dr. Fayyaz praised the speakers and participants for their invaluable speeches and insightful discussion on the topic. She specifically appreciated Islamabad Policy Institute for its initiative to engage the youth and students in invaluable discussion to enhance their understanding on significant national security issues.



Recommendations

- It is the responsibility of political parties to build national consensus. In this regard a comprehensive institutional framework should be established to formulate and implement pragmatic domestic as well as foreign policy so that future line of action is clear.
- It must be kept in mind that threat to IOK is a direct and existential threat to Pakistan's sovereignty. Pakistan, therefore, needs to consolidate and sustain the consensus within the country on Kashmir dispute.
- The human rights violations in IOK should be highlighted through the international media and international community, human rights organizations and Pakistani diaspora living abroad should be mobilized to express solidarity with the Kashmir cause and lobby for its resolution.
- Youth and activists in Pakistan should be encouraged to use social media and other means to communicate to interface with political parties and human rights groups in India that are pro-peace and have, courageously, criticized Modi-led BJP government's actions in Kashmir.
- The need of the time is to make the United States, China, Russia, Central Asia and other strategic and economic partners of India exert more pressure on New Delhi to give up its inflexibility on the issue and engage with Pakistan for finding a solution to complex scenario.
- The Kashmir dispute and hydro-politics are intertwined in nature and have strong linkages with war and peace in the region. In response to Modi's water threats, Pakistan should prepare a strategy for ensuring its water security.