

# **The Kashmir Uprising and India-Pakistan Relations**

## **A Need for Conflict Resolution, not Management**



**Happymon JACOB**

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# Executive summary

This paper analyses the causes and consequences of the 2016 uprising in Kashmir, making six interrelated arguments. First of all, it argues that notwithstanding the fact that India and Pakistan have multiple conflicts to resolve, including the Siachen Glacier, Sir Creek etc., Kashmir continues to be the most significant dispute in so far as it holds the key to a rapprochement between the two South Asian rivals. For instance, during the period when Kashmir was purposefully addressed between the two sides, from 2003 to 2007-2008, the relationship improved significantly on other fronts as well.

Second, the direct or indirect complicity of the Pakistani state in the terrorist violence carried out against India is the fundamental reason why the two sides have been unable to make any definitive gains from their bilateral dialogues.

Third, the paper underlines that normalcy in Kashmir can be misleading. The 2008 uprising came as a complete surprise given the fact that the past insurgency had been a failure and India and Pakistan had made positive strides in their relationship. Since 2008, then, it so appears that normalcy – a situation wherein people seemingly go about their daily lives without bothering with overt dissident political activism or protests – is a temporary break between major uprisings. Mistaking such temporary normalcy as an indication of a complete end to the insurgency in the state has proven to be a mistake more than once.

Fourth, this paper argues that the new insurgency in Kashmir that is taking root today is quite dissimilar to the one that began in the late 1980s and tapered off in the mid-1990s. Kashmir today is faced with a new wave of young, educated militants, a large number of whom seem to be driven by religious motivation. This is very different from the 1990s. Moreover, this is an indisputably indigenous movement. It will therefore require extraordinary effort from New Delhi to bring Kashmir back from the brink of another full-blown insurgency.

Fifth, the Kashmir conflict is a political contestation operating at many levels, which should be addressed using both symbolic and substantive responses. One of the reasons why the new BJP-led government in New Delhi has not been able to reach out to the Kashmiri separatists is due to the clash of symbols that drive their respective political positions.

Finally, the electoral dynamics in India have a clear bearing on New Delhi's ability to resolve the Kashmir conflict. Resolving this conflict in a win-win manner is indeed the correct thing to do from a grand strategic point of view, but it may not necessarily be so from a short-term electoral consideration: the latter seems to inform the BJP's approach to Kashmir.

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# Introduction

On July 8, 2016, India's security forces killed the popular Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani in an encounter in South Kashmir, in the Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir (J&K).<sup>1</sup> To the complete dismay of the local authorities in J&K and the central government in New Delhi, this killing sparked an unrelenting anti-India uprising in Kashmir, which is currently (as of November 2016) in its fifth month. This revolt has grown into the most sustained, and worrying, popular uprising in Kashmir since the late 1980s when insurgency first broke out in the state.

Since trouble began in July 2016, the Kashmir Valley has mostly been under lockdown, mobile Internet services suspended and curfew imposed by the government for most part of the day. The agitators, disparate groups and ideologies brought together by their pent-up anger against New Delhi, have been following an 'anarchic' protest movement, with uncontrollable crowds attacking security forces with stones, often responded to by the security forces with disproportionate use of force, leading to deaths, thousands of injured and many blinded for life.<sup>2</sup> Since July, close to 90 people, including 2 police personnel, have been killed.

While analysts and officials have been taken aback by the timing and scale of the uprising, a closer look at the developments in Kashmir in the past decade could help us demystify this surprise factor. There have been many indications since 2008 that Kashmir was becoming restive once again, after half a decade of relative calm. The recent developments have shown that the signs of normalcy in Kashmir can be misleading: the deep-rooted unease of the Kashmiris with the Indian State, aided by the Pakistani security agencies, was waiting for a trigger to explode. The recent events indicate that Kashmir is perhaps one stop away from a full-blown insurgency, a throwback into the late 1980s and early 1990s.

This paper seeks to do three things: one, explain the causes of the recent Kashmir uprising in the broader context of the previous uprisings and India-Pakistan relations since the late 1980s; two, offer a critical appraisal of the potential for conflict resolution in the Valley, and; finally,

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1. Hizbul Mujahideen is one of the largest jihadist groups operating in Indian-controlled Kashmir.

2. Indian forces have used pellet guns to quell protesters in Kashmir. These weapons, which are described as "non-lethal", have caused serious eye injuries.

examine the implications of the Kashmir uprising on India-Pakistan relations.

When discussing the Kashmir conflict, it is important to make a crucial distinction between the conflict *in* Kashmir (characterized by a deep sense of historical mistrust between New Delhi and a large number of Kashmiri Muslims), and the conflict *over* Kashmir (which refers to the territorial contestation between India and Pakistan over the erstwhile princely state of J&K). For analytical purposes, the two conflicts need to be examined separately, even while recognizing that there is a interactive link between the two. While conflict resolution *in* Kashmir requires a peace process between New Delhi and the Kashmiris, the one *over* Kashmir needs a *modus vivendi* between New Delhi and Islamabad. And yet the Kashmir question can only be settled in its entirety if there is a comprehensive peace package that addresses all aspects of the conflict.



## The Kashmir Region



# The first Kashmir Insurgency and Indo-Pak tension: A recap of 1987-2003

## The Kashmir insurgency of the late 1980s

The insurgency in Kashmir, which began in the late 1980s resulted from three proximate factors: first, the Indian State's political misdeeds in Kashmir – most notably the rigging of the 1987 election to the State Assembly prompting many members of the Muslim Conference, which lost the election due to rigging, to take to militancy against India<sup>3</sup>; second, Pakistani interference in J&K<sup>4</sup>; and third, the winding down of the anti-Soviet Mujahedeen war in Afghanistan. With respect to the second and third factors, one should recall that Pakistan's secret service – the Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) – shifted many Afghan Mujahedeen fighters who found themselves without a cause or funding after the Soviet Union withdrew from Afghanistan and the US lost interest there, to Kashmir to fight the Indian State.<sup>5</sup> However, the early phase of the insurgency also witnessed a great deal of local participation: Kashmiri youngsters would travel to the Pakistani side of Kashmir, would get trained in camps set up by the ISI and return with weapons and directions to fight the Indian forces in Kashmir.

Pakistani scholar Pervez Hoodbhoy recently wrote about the Pakistani involvement in the following words: “Pakistan lost little time in hijacking what was then an indigenous uprising. The excesses committed by Indian security forces were soon eclipsed by those committed by Pakistan-based mujahedeen. The massacres of Kashmiri Pandits, targeting of civilians accused of collaborating with India, killings of Kashmiri political leaders, destruction of cinema houses and liquor shops, forcing of women into the veil, and revival of Shia-Sunni disputes severely undermined the legitimacy

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3. N. C. Behera, *Demystifying Kashmir*, Brookings Institution Press, Washington D. C., 2007, p. 47.

4. See for instance, H. Haqqani, “Pakistan's Terrorism Dilemma” in S. P. Limaye, R. G. Wirsing, and M. Malik, *Religious Radicalism and Security in South Asia*, Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies, Honolulu, Hawaii, 2004, p. 35.

5. J. Blank, “Let's Talk About Kashmir”, *Foreign Policy*, September 5, 2014. available at: <http://foreignpolicy.com>.

of the Kashmiri freedom movement and deprived it of its most potent weapon—the moral high ground.”<sup>6</sup>

As the insurgency progressed through the 1990s, the local participation became marginal thanks to the gains made by India’s counter-insurgency efforts as well as fatigue setting in within the Kashmiri society.<sup>7</sup> Having seen the toll insurgency had taken on their society, Kashmiri youngsters refused to join the ranks of militancy. This led to an increase in the influx of foreign fighters, who the Kashmiri population did not see as their own, and led to the eventual de-legitimisation of the armed insurgency itself.

In other words, the Kashmir insurgency declined in the mid-1990s not because the underlying political issues were resolved, but because India could make military gains on the ground, Pakistan lost international support for its Kashmir campaign and the Kashmiris were getting tired of the violence. This meant that Kashmir insurgency, politically unresolved and militarily suppressed, never really went away: it merely receded into the Kashmiri sub-consciousness, capable of bursting into their conscious behaviour given a chance. And it did.

## The Indo-Pak crises of the late 1990s and early 2000s

While Kashmir receded into the background after the mid-1990s, tension between India and Pakistan did not dissipate significantly. Through the 1990s the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir and the International Border (IB) in Jammu witnessed incessant cross firing. In May 1998, the two countries tested nuclear devices and officially declared themselves nuclear-armed. Following the nuclear tests, India’s then right-wing Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee decided to give peace a chance and made a historic trip to Lahore in February 1999. He signed a number of treaties and agreements during his meeting with his counterpart, Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan.

However, while Pakistan’s civilian government was talking peace with India, its army, under Gen. Pervez Musharraf, was intruding in the Kargil sector of J&K, which India detected only in May 1999. India used military

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6. P. Hoodbhoy, “Bleed India with a Thousand Cuts’ Policy Is in a Shambles”, *Open Magazine*, October 14, 2016, available at: [www.openthemagazine.com](http://www.openthemagazine.com).

7. S. Ramachandran, “New Generation of Militants Emerging in Kashmir”, The Jamestown Foundation, *Terrorism Monitor*, Volume: 14 Issue: 8, available at: <https://jamestown.org/>.

force to expel the Pakistani intruders and relations between the two sides slid further into uncertainty, with India accusing Pakistan of backstabbing.

Even after the end of the Kargil war, the LoC and IB continued to be tense. Firing across the border by the two armies was routine. Prime Minister Vajpayee attempted to make peace with Pakistan once again and invited Pakistan's new military ruler – and architect of the Kargil invasion – Gen. Musharraf to Agra, in India, for a summit meeting, which unfortunately did not achieve anything.<sup>8</sup> In December 2001, Pakistan-based terrorists carried out an attack against the Indian Parliament while it was in session and killed seven security personnel.<sup>9</sup> This led to a mass mobilization of Indian troops along the border with Pakistan, though no war broke out. Tension continued through 2002 due to yet another terror strike against a military facility in J&K.<sup>10</sup> Firing incidents had reached a new height during the period between 2001 to 2003 due to the fence-building by India along the border with Pakistan.

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8. G. Parthasarathy, "Missed Opportunities from Simla to Agra", *The Tribune*, March 7, 2004, available at: [www.tribuneindia.com](http://www.tribuneindia.com).

9. B. Muralidhar Reddy, "Jaish behind Parliament Attack: ex-ISI Chief", *The Hindu*, March 7, 2004, available at: [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com).

10. L. Puri, "30 Killed in Jammu Suicide Attack", *The Hindu*, May 15, 2002, available at: [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com).

# Missed opportunities post-2003

## The Indo-Pak peace process (2003-2008)

In April 2003, Prime Minister Vajpayee once again called for a dialogue during a public speech in J&K. Later that year, in November, Pakistan offered a ceasefire agreement along the border in J&K, which India accepted. It may be noted that the US government had put pressure on Islamabad and New Delhi to engage in a dialogue process.<sup>11</sup> This led to a cessation of the firing that had become a routine on the state's border with Pakistan. During a meeting in Colombo in January 2004, Prime Minister Vajpayee and President Musharraf agreed to begin the bilateral Composite Dialogue process, which sought to discuss all outstanding issues, eight of them in total. Despite the coming to power of a new government in New Delhi later that year, the political commitment to the peace process continued. If anything, the new Congress-led government under Dr. Manmohan Singh tried to strengthen the peace process with Pervez Musharraf. The two sides specifically, and purposefully, engaged each other on the Kashmir issue.

The period between 2004 and 2007 witnessed hectic diplomatic and political activities leading to one of the best phases of the India-Pakistan relationship. In April 2005, when President Musharraf came to India to watch an India-Pakistan cricket match, the two leaders claimed that the peace process was now irreversible.<sup>12</sup> The backchannel negotiations on Kashmir succeeded in negotiating a deal between the two sides without sacrificing the core interests of either party. A large chunk of the Kashmiri dissident leadership was on board the proposal, fashioned along the lines of the so-called 'Musharraf formula' and Dr. Singh's idea of 'making borders irrelevant'.<sup>13</sup> Backchannel negotiators - Indian envoy S.K. Lambah (the former Indian High Commissioner to Pakistan) and his Pakistani

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11. "U.S. Pushes India-Pakistan Peace", *CNN.com*, May 8, 2003, available at: <http://edition.cnn.com>.

12. T. Friel and K. Zaheer, "Peace 'irreversible'; India, Pakistan soften on Kashmir", available at: [www.alertnet.org](http://www.alertnet.org).

13. "Musharraf Offers Kashmir 'solution'", *The Guardian*, December 5, 2006. Available at [www.theguardian.com](http://www.theguardian.com); S. Srivastava, "India seeks 'borderless' Kashmir", *BBC.com*, May 30, 2005, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk>.

counterpart Tariq Aziz, an advisor to the Pakistani President – met at a number of undisclosed locations to discuss and finalise the details of the peace proposal.<sup>14</sup>

## The “near-deal” on Kashmir

Though not officially acknowledged by either India or Pakistan, details of the proposed solution to the Kashmir standoff have subsequently surfaced and many of those involved in the negotiations, including former Pakistani Foreign Minister Khursheed Mehmood Kasuri, have discussed them. In April 2010, Kasuri stated that, “the previous Musharraf government had completed almost 90 per cent of the spadework on the half-a-century old Kashmir dispute by 2007 as the whole exercise just needed the formal signature of all the three parties to the issue—Pakistan, India and representatives of Kashmir.”<sup>15</sup> He also argued that the “near-deal” on Kashmir was the result of three years of quiet diplomacy that proposed a formula for peace characterised by “loose autonomy that stopped short of the azadi (freedom) and self-governance aspirations (...) to be introduced on both sides of the disputed frontier” which was understood to be “between complete independence and autonomy.”<sup>16</sup>

According to Kasuri, the deal was to be signed in March 2007 when Dr. Singh would have been invited to visit Pakistan to do so. However, by early 2007 Musharraf started losing his power and legitimacy in Pakistan and Dr. Singh realized he didn’t have the political support from his own party in India, the risk-averse Congress Party, to see the deal through.<sup>17</sup> Developments in 2008 deteriorated the relationship, as India experienced a series of terrorist attacks of Pakistani origin. After the July 2008 car bomb attack on the Indian embassy in Kabul that killed 57 people, including senior Indian officials, Foreign Secretary Shiv Shankar Menon stated that the peace process was “under stress.”<sup>18</sup> Then, after terrorist attacks in Bangalore (Karnataka) and Ahmedabad (Gujarat) during the same month, Menon declared while launching the fifth round of the bilateral Composite Dialogue in Colombo that “India-Pakistan relations

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14. S. Coll, “The Back Channel: India and Pakistan’s secret Kashmir Talks”, *The New Yorker*, March 2, 2009, available at: [www.newyorker.com](http://www.newyorker.com).

15. B. Dogar and R. Roy, “Kashmir Solution just a Signature Away: Kasuri”, available at: [www.amankiasha.com](http://www.amankiasha.com).

16. *Ibid.*

17. A.S Dulat with A. Sinha, *Kashmir: The Vajpayee Years*, HarperCollins, New Delhi, 2015.

18. “India Says Dialogue under Stress”, *BBC.com*, July 21, 2008, available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk>.

were at a four-year low.”<sup>19</sup> However, many elements of the Composite Dialogue were sustained.

What really broke the camel's back was the Mumbai terror attack committed by the Lashkar-e-Taiba – a Pakistan-based terrorist organisation – on 26 November 2008. Between November 2008 and February 2009 the world witnessed the serious possibility of a military confrontation between the two countries. In January 2009, New Delhi cancelled previously scheduled talks on the Sir Creek maritime dispute, and the Composite Dialogue remained officially suspended for over two years. In less than twelve months, the relationship deteriorated so much that from signing a peace deal on Kashmir, India and Pakistan almost went to war. This shows how accident-prone the relationship is and how much of an impact Pakistan-based terror organisations have on the bilateral relationship.

## A new political climate in Kashmir

During the period from 2004 to 2008, Prime Minister Singh initiated a number of confidence-building measures with the Kashmiris. In 2006, he organised three crucial Round Table Conferences with the Kashmiri political leadership, although key dissident leaders boycotted them. He also announced the setting up of five working groups to examine various aspects of the Kashmir conflict. The groups were tasked to deal with “improving the Centre's relations with the State, furthering the relations across the Line of Control (LoC), giving a boost to the State's economic development, rehabilitating the destitute families of militants and reviewing the cases of detainees and ensuring good governance.”<sup>20</sup>

By early 2008, there was a feeling that Kashmir was changing for good, especially due to the improved relationship between the Kashmiris and New Delhi, and between India and Pakistan. Even the 2008 agitation, which started out as an agitation by Kashmiri Muslims against the transfer of land to a Hindu Shrine, the Shri Amarnath Shrine Board, by the J&K government, followed by an economic blockade of Muslim-dominated Kashmir by Hindu-dominated Jammu, did not fundamentally transform the positive vibes that were visible in Kashmir.

In other words, after 20 years of insurgency, Kashmir was changing for good. The differences between 1989 and 2008 were huge. I had argued

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19. “Briefing by Foreign Secretary After India-Pakistan Foreign Secretary-Level Talks”, *Indian Ministry of External Affairs*, July 21, 2008.

20. S. Bukhari and V. Kumar, “5 working groups for Jammu & Kashmir”, *The Hindu*, May 26, 2006, available at: [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com).



in 2009, reflecting on these changes, that in 1989, India found itself on the losing side of the Cold War, weak and friendless. The international community was negatively disposed towards India vis-à-vis the Kashmir issue. The Kashmiri dissidents, Pakistan and the militants in Kashmir had managed to 'internationalise' their cause and garnered significant levels of sympathy for it. India was being pushed into a corner. This was no more the case by 2008. India was an emerging power and considered to be a key stabilising player in the South Asian subcontinent. The international community was no longer keen to discuss Kashmir or force a solution; it knew India would not be pushed. Furthermore, unlike in the late-1980s, Pakistan was a much-weakened power in 2008 without many reliable strategic partners and widely feared to be heading for failure due to its promotion of terrorism. And for the international community, Kashmir was no more a pet issue.<sup>21</sup>

Over the years, Kashmiri views on Pakistan had changed. Kashmiris had entertained a certain fascination for Pakistan especially due to the iron hand used by the Indian State in putting down the insurgency. This was also changing in the late 2000s, thanks to the existential problems that Pakistan was facing, the atrocities that Pakistan-sponsored terrorists had committed in Kashmir, and the general perception that joining Pakistan may not be the best option for Kashmir. Hence Pakistan no longer enjoyed much support in the Valley in the late 2000s.

More importantly, by the end of the decade (2007-8), the political climate in Kashmir also transformed. The 'mainstreaming of dissent' was a phenomenon that started taking roots. From being completely anti-India in the early 1990s, separatist politics and 'azadi' sentiments became more nuanced, more complex than before and manifested in many forms, ranging from the All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) to the People's Democratic Party (PDP).

Set up in 1999, the PDP was widely seen as a 'pro-azadi,' 'separatist' or even 'soft-separatist' party. However, having ruled the state for three years, the PDP was very much a mainstream Kashmiri political party with clear links to the Indian State. On the other side of the divide, the dissident APHC often raised governance-related issues. This crossing of traditional political boundaries by the hitherto opposed political groups indicated the complexity of Kashmir's new politics.<sup>22</sup>

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21. H. Jacob, "Kashmir insurgency, 20 years after", *The Hindu*, December 24, 2009, available at: [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com).

22. *Ibid.*



In other words, there was a feeling by the late 2000s that it was perhaps possible to chart a new future for Kashmir given the changes underway in the Valley as well as bilaterally. The events from 2008 until the recent uprising indicate that this favourable atmosphere was wasted. Among other things, the non-serious manner in which the Central government treated the reports submitted by the Working Groups appointed by the Prime Minister's Round Table conferences had a negative impact on the Kashmiri polity.

There was yet another uprising in Kashmir in 2010. It was triggered by the killing of three civilians in an alleged fake Army encounter. Subsequently, with the killing of a Kashmiri student, Tufail Mattu in June 2010, Kashmir witnessed an unrest that claimed 130 Kashmiri lives. In the words of Shujaat Bhukari, a Kashmiri journalist, "The wounds were deep and even though order was restored after months, the scars remained and the anti-India sentiment did not fade away."<sup>23</sup> New Delhi responded by appointing a team of interlocutors to hold discussions with Kashmiris and suggest solutions to the conflict, which they did, but the government refused to act on the report.<sup>24</sup>

Then, in February 2013, the Congress government in New Delhi executed Muhammad Afzal Guru, a convict in the 2001 Parliament attack case, leading to protests and shutdowns in the Kashmir Valley. The incident deepened the divide between New Delhi and Kashmir, as the separatists and the general public in Kashmir called Guru a martyr.<sup>25</sup> The LoC and IB continued to witness incessant ceasefire violations (CFVs) by both sides, with scores of casualties and civilian displacement. Attempts were made to break the bilateral stalemate but without any success.

## Some hope under the BJP-led government of Narendra Modi

When the new BJP-led government in Delhi came to power under the leadership of Narendra Modi in May 2014, there was some hope that India-Pakistan relations would improve since it was believed that it would take a strong leader to make a lasting deal with Pakistan. This belief was strengthened when Modi invited the Pakistani Prime Minister, Nawaz Sharif, to Delhi for his swearing-in ceremony in May 2014. However, this bonhomie did not last long as terror strikes against India continued, and so

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23. S. Bukhari, "What's Got Kashmir So Angry? Burhan Wani Is Not the Only Reason", July 12, 2016, available at: [www.newslandry.com](http://www.newslandry.com).

24. Report available at: <http://mha.nic.in>.

25. S. Vij, "So This Is What We Gained From Afzal Guru's Hanging", *Ndtv.com*, January 12, 2016.

did the CFVs. But, Mr. Modi's surprise visit to Pakistan in December 2015 to meet Nawaz Sharif in a private function was seen as a breakthrough, which took place after the two National Security Advisors started holding private parleys between themselves to iron out key differences.

Kashmiris in the meantime were upset once again when relief from the Union government did not reach them on time during the 2014 Kashmir floods. What upset them even more was the PDP, the so-called soft-separatist party, entering into an alliance with the BJP to form a government in J&K. Given how vigorously the PDP had campaigned against Mr. Modi and his party, many Kashmiris were convinced that this was an opportunistic alliance purely for the sake of gaining power. And yet, when these two unlikely partners came together to form a coalition government in early 2015, there was hope that things would get better for J&K given the PDP's popularity in South Kashmir and the BJP's historic mandate at the national level. Close to two years since the coalition came to power, all that J&K is left with is the PDP's political isolation and helplessness, and the BJP's inflexible political positions.

The PDP leadership repeatedly reminded the BJP of the need to deliver on the promises enshrined in the "Agenda of Alliance", including "to facilitate and help initiate a sustained and meaningful dialogue with all internal stakeholders, which will include all political groups irrespective of their ideological views and predilections". However, not one of the key objectives outlined in the document has been taken up by the coalition so far, not even for discussion.<sup>26</sup> This has led to a de-legitimisation of the elected government in J&K. Indeed, according to an account, "Police records confirm that some of the young men who have recently become militants had actively canvassed for the PDP in the 2014 general elections."<sup>27</sup>

## "Reaching out to Kashmiris"

The feeling among the Kashmiris that New Delhi has never been serious about ending the conflict in the Valley is not entirely out of place, as the latter has tended to use talks to buy time and defuse a crisis situation in hand. In February 2003, the Vajpayee government appointed retired home secretary N.N. Vohra as the government's interlocutor for J&K. He held

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26. H. Jacob, "Living in Denial on Kashmir", *The Hindu*, July 14, 2016, available at: [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com).

27. S. Bukhari, "Why the Death of Militant Burhan Wani Has Kashmiris Up in Arms", *BBC.com*, July 11, 2016, available at: [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com).

discussion with a number of separatists. Thereafter, in June 2004, the Centre held talks with the Kashmiri separatists.

In May 2006, Prime Minister Singh set up five working groups to resolve the issues confronting J&K. All the groups gave their recommendations but none has been implemented yet. In 2008, when Kashmiri unrest erupted, an all-party delegation headed by the then-Home Minister visited Kashmir to bring the uprising to an end. Again during the 2010 uprising, a 39-member all-party delegation visited Kashmir after more than 120 lives were lost due to shooting by security forces. Based on the suggestion of the delegation, a team of three interlocutors was appointed in October 2010. In their report in October 2011, the interlocutors gave a number of suggestions for conflict resolution in Kashmir, none of which was systematically followed up by the government.<sup>28</sup>

Kashmiri journalist Muzzamil Jaleel feels that the successive governments in New Delhi were never really serious about conflict resolution in Kashmir; they were only desirous of conflict management. According to him, since the early 1990s, New Delhi's policy has been "rooted in the belief that managing the conflict, maintaining status quo and delaying resolution will ultimately tire out the majority in Kashmir and end the political problem."<sup>29</sup> The combined result of this mishandling has been a sharp, and worrying, spike in the number of home-grown militants in the Valley today.

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28. A. Naqshbandi, "All-Party Delegations to Commissions: Delhi's Attempt to Engage with Kashmir", *Hindustan times*, August 12, 2016, available at: [www.hindustantimes.com](http://www.hindustantimes.com).

29. M. Jaleel, "What Kashmir Says", *Indian Express*, August 12, 2016, available at: <http://indianexpress.com>.

# Kashmir on the precipice

## A new kind of uprising

The uprising in 2016 is widely perceived to be different from the earlier ones of 2008 and 2010, as well as the one in the late 1980s and early 1990s. M. K. Narayanan, India's former National Security Advisor, wrote an alarming piece about what he sees as the new insurgency in Kashmir: "No evidence has surfaced that the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT) or the Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) are involved in the violence, though Hizbul Mujahideen cadres are present in sizeable numbers. (...) in marked contrast to earlier phases of trouble in Kashmir, the present movement is almost entirely home grown. The spontaneity of many 'mini-uprisings' demands a different explanation from earlier ones, for it smacks of near total alienation of an entire generation of young Kashmiris angry with the present state of affairs. Many are even willing to commit suicide to vent their anger."<sup>30</sup>

Senior journalist Harinder Baweja agrees with this assessment when she notes that: "the locals are once again outnumbering what the security establishment refers to as 'foreign terrorists'".<sup>31</sup> Referring to official figures, she indicates that there are an estimated 66 local and 44 foreign terrorists in north Kashmir and 109 local and 7 foreign terrorists in south Kashmir. In other words, while the Valley may still have Pakistani influence, much of what is happening there is spontaneous and locally-driven.

One particular phenomenon that puzzles Indian security agencies and analysts alike is the leaderless agitation that is taking place in Kashmir, again quite unlike the previous occasions. Indeed, Narayanan writes: "The movement gives the impression today of being on autopilot, without any known leaders."<sup>32</sup> Moreover, this uprising shuns the use of weapons. Senior journalist Prem Shankar Jha calls it "the Rise of Kashmir's Second

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30. M. K. Narayanan, "Address the 'New Normal' in Kashmir", *The Hindu*, October 10, 2016, available at: [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com).

31. H. Baweja, "Kashmir's Disturbing New Reality", *Hindustan Times*, available at: [www.hindustantimes.com](http://www.hindustantimes.com).

32. M. K. Narayanan, "Address the 'New Normal' in Kashmir", *op. cit.*

‘Intifada’<sup>33</sup>. While the local youths who joined the ranks of militancy did pick the gun against security forces, during the uprising itself no arms were used by the protesters on security forces: they were merely using stones or bare hands, unlike in the late 1980s and early 1990s when the use of weapons was routine.

## Educated militants

What is even more troubling is the character of the new age militant who is educated, hailing from well-to-do families and religiously motivated. Bashaarat Masood wrote in the *Indian Express* how youngsters from middle class families were joining the ranks of militancy, which disproves the argument that the insurgency is a result of unemployment: “Burhan belongs to a wealthy, educated family of Tral. His father Muzaffar Ahmad Wani is a school principal, his mother Maimoona Muzaffar is a science postgraduate and teaches the Quran, his brother Khalid, who was killed allegedly by the Army in April this year when he went to meet Burhan in the forests, was a postgraduate in commerce, and his two other siblings go to school. It’s a profile that’s common to most young local militants.”<sup>34</sup>

## Religious radicalization

Kashmir has traditionally been home to a tolerant Muslim community, with a great deal of Sufi influence, where Hindus and Muslims lived in harmony for the most part. Islam practiced in the state has not only accommodated other religions but has indeed incorporated from other religious practices. Kashmiris have always been proud of their ability to co-exist peacefully with other religions: the notion of Kashmiriyat (syncretism of Kashmir) is widely considered to be the soul of the Kashmiri way of life.<sup>35</sup> Over the years, however, the talk about ‘Kashmiriyat’ has become less significant in the Valley. In the 1990s, religious extremism from Pakistan started transforming the local political landscape. During insurgency, many of the Pakistan-based terror organisations brought an intolerant form of Islam into Kashmir.

Slowly but steadily, radical Islam is taking root in the Valley. Kashmiri columnist Arjimand Hussain Talib points out that “Mosques which would

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33. P. Shankar Jha, “The Rise of Kashmir’s Second ‘Intifada’”, *The Wire*, August 23, 2016, available at: <http://thewire.in>.

34. B. Masood, “Guns ‘n’ Poses: The New Crop of Militants in Kashmir”, *Indian Express*, July 26, 2015, available at: <http://indianexpress.com>.

35. N. Ali Khan, “The Political and Cultural Richness of Kashmiriyat”, October 27, 2016, available at: [www.counterpunch.org](http://www.counterpunch.org).

traditionally be run by people of Hanafi thought, highly influenced by the Sufi ways of religious practices, are increasingly being overtaken by Wahabi ideologues. This is happening not only in Kashmir's countryside but in Srinagar city as well, including the Old city – considered a strong bastion of Hanafi Islamic thought. Although this transition does not necessarily mean outright religious radicalisation, however, it leaves scope for transformation which over a period of time attains a degree of radicalisation – both social and political”.<sup>36</sup>

It is important to note that radicalisation in Kashmir has increased together with the emergence of Hindu radical politics in India. The rise of the BJP, in the past quarter century since the early 1990s, seems to have strengthened radicalisation within Kashmir.

## Social legitimacy for militancy

There is also today a disquieting rise in the legitimacy for armed militancy among the civil society and the educated classes of the Valley – Burhan Wani's father, who remains convinced of the righteousness of his son's mission, is symbolic of that radical change. A society that was exhausted by violence and gun culture has suddenly started justifying it. Even Pakistani terrorists are getting support from the population of the Valley today. For instance, when Abu Qasim, a Pakistani commander of the Lashkar-e-Taiba, was killed by the Indian security forces in early 2016, his funeral was attended by more than 30,000 Kashmiris.<sup>37</sup>

A decade of mishandling Kashmir has fundamentally damaged the liberal political space that could have countered the return of militancy. Even the moderate Hurriyat factions find it difficult to converse with the youngsters shouting for azadi, throwing stones, and ready to die.<sup>38</sup> Social legitimacy and religious influence have together led to a certain fearlessness among those picking up a gun against the State.

## Set to return

The 2016 July uprising is already dying down and the government of India will weather the storm with its patience and military might. Moreover, there is no sympathy in the international community for insurgencies such as this and no one takes Pakistan's complaints of human rights violations

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36. <http://arjmandtalib.blogspot.hu>.

37. S. Bukhari, "Why Kashmir's Militants Have Become 'Heroes' Again", *BBC.com*, March 1, 2016, available at: [www.bbc.com](http://www.bbc.com).

38. H. Jacob, "Living in Denial on Kashmir". *op. cit.*

in Kashmir seriously. If such normalcy is eventually achievable, why should we be concerned?

Kashmir watchers disagree that the Indian State will be able to bring an end to the uprising in Kashmir in the longer run. P. Shankar Jha, an astute Indian analyst on Kashmir, argues: “Kashmiris cannot keep fighting and protesting forever. Ultimately they will have to choose between the loss of work, the loss of education for their children, the loss of sales, mounting debt and interest burdens, and increasing shortages of fuel, medicines, and other things in life that make peace so precious. But that will only bottle up the rage that is consuming the youth of the Valley. If the government does not open a valve for it to escape through, an increasing number of youth will take Burhan’s way out – snatch a rifle or kill a government functionary and become a militant.”<sup>39</sup>

Similarly, Siddiq Wahid, a Kashmiri intellectual, argues that Kashmir’s azadi struggle will not die down easily even though the present uprising would eventually go away, only to return again: “Given the limits of pain and loss that civil society can endure, the protests will subside, people will exchange notes on the details of as yet unknown brutalities perpetrated in the countryside and the anger will deepen (...). The municipal corporation government will continue for a couple of years, the protests will then return with greater ferocity and be put down once again by even greater state violence. The cycle will repeat until the perilous confrontation is sucked into conflagration.”<sup>40</sup>

In short, the Kashmir insurgency has taken a life of its own, with its own momentum and no one knows what might happen next and when. And that is the real worry, of yet another popular uprising waiting to happen. As academic Sumantra Bose puts it, “the Kashmir issue is—to use two worn but valid clichés—both a festering sore and India’s Achilles’ heel.”<sup>41</sup> Bose is right: New Delhi’s inability to pacify Kashmir will not only ensure that the uprising will return but more so it could potentially be a setback for India’s larger geopolitical and developmental goals. Another related problem is the ill-treatment of youngsters by the government. A “concerned citizens” delegation, including senior BJP leader Yashwant Sinha, which recently visited Kashmir reported the rampant misuse of special legal provisions against minors.<sup>42</sup>

39. P. Shankar Jha, “How Rajnath Singh Shot India in the Heart”, *The Wire*, July 28, 2016, available at: <http://thewire.in>.

40. S. Wahid, “Learning From Kashmir’s Summer of 2016”, *The Wire*, October 17, 2016, available at: <http://thewire.in>.

41. S. Bose, “The Captives of Kashmir”, July 29, 2016, available at: [www.openthemagazine.com](http://www.openthemagazine.com).

42. “Full text: Statement of Yashwant team after Kashmir visit”, *Indian Express*, November 11, 2016, available at: <http://indianexpress.com>.



# The clash of symbolisms

## The BJP inability to resolve the Kashmir conflict

New Delhi's failure to deliver on its political promises, account for human rights violations, and stem the erosion of political rights, along with Pakistan's attempts at aiding and abetting armed militancy in the state, have historically contributed to the Kashmir insurgency. Each of these has differently impacted on various sections of Kashmiris. Conflict resolution, therefore, is far more complicated and difficult today than ever before. The difficulty also comes from the fact that the ruling regime in New Delhi does not find it imperative to politically resolve the Kashmir issue or address it bilaterally with Pakistan: this seems to be an emerging policy choice of the government, indeed. This absence of a desire to resolve the Kashmir conflict both internally with Kashmiris and bilaterally with Pakistan comes from the BJP's own ideological positions.

The BJP government in New Delhi approaches the Kashmir issue either using a Pakistan angle (insisting that the Kashmir uprising is propped up by Pakistan) or from a Hindu-Muslim perspective. Home Minister Rajnath Singh's attempts to blame the unrest entirely on Pakistan and to rope in Delhi-based Muslim clerics to reach out to Kashmiris are indicative of these flawed approaches.<sup>43</sup> The reality is that neither do Indian Muslims have anything to do with what happens in Kashmir nor is the 'azadi' struggle in Kashmir a purely Islamic religious movement.

This inability of the BJP to meaningfully respond to the ongoing turmoil in Kashmir, at a very fundamental level, is the result of a clash that exists between the BJP's politics of symbolism and what Kashmir's 'azadi' movement symbolises. While some of the demands made and positions taken by both the BJP leadership and the Kashmiri dissidents are indeed substantive, the fact is that there are thick layers of symbolism that surround these substantive arguments, with the latter almost clouding the former. This issue of symbolism is not only preventing the BJP from

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43. "Pakistan Played Key role in Fomenting Trouble in Kashmir: Rajnath", *The Hindu*, July 21, 2016. Available at [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com); M. Chhibber, "Rajnath Singh opens Track II, taps 'eminent Muslims' for ideas", *Indian Express*, August 23, 2016, available at: <http://indianexpress.com>.



reaching out to the Kashmiris but also frustrates its talks with Pakistan on the Kashmir issue.

## The BJP ideological baggage on Kashmir

In the BJP's nationalist cosmology, Article 370 of the Constitution<sup>44</sup>, and the separate flag and constitution, which symbolise that special status of J&K in the Indian Union, run counter to its idea of Indian nationalism. Right wing ideologue Syama Prasad Mookerjee's evocative slogan "Ek vidhan, ek nishan aur ek samvidhan" (one country, one emblem and one constitution) forms the BJP's political approach to Kashmir. In reality though, the J&K flag and its constitution are not privileged over the Indian national flag or Constitution, and Article 370 of the Constitution has lost all meaning over the years. In other words, while in the Kashmiri political imagination, the flag, constitution and whatever is left of Article 370 form a crucial part of Kashmiri nationalism and even its 'azadi' demand, the BJP, a party that rides high on exclusivist political symbolism, finds it hard to accept. For the Kashmiri nationalist, abolition of Article 370 would be symbolic of complete 'Indian occupation'; for the BJP and its associated organisations in the Sangh Parivar, it would be in line with bringing Kashmir into the Indian mainstream.

Take, for example, the Armed Forces (Special Powers) Act, or AFSPA<sup>45</sup>. To Kashmiris, laws like AFSPA are symbolic of Indian oppression, whereas for the BJP, withdrawing AFSPA would be a symbolic defeat at the hands of Kashmiri separatists. The reality, however, is that revoking AFSPA from a few districts in Kashmir or even partially amending it would be a symbol that Kashmiris would find greatly encouraging. Moreover, doing so would hardly affect the Army's operational capability there. The same logic applies to the withdrawal of Central forces

44. After the J&K state acceded to the Indian Union in 1947, Article 370 was introduced in the Indian Constitution in order to define the relationship between New Delhi and Srinagar. As per this article, the Union government of India can make laws applicable to J&K only in those areas that are specifically mentioned in the Treaty of Accession that the Maharaja of J&K signed in 1947. In the Treaty of Accession under section "The Matters with Respect to Which the Dominion Legislature may make Laws for this State," the subjects mentioned are: Defense, External Affairs, and Communications. The spirit of Article 370 has, however, been chipped away by a succession of state governments with the collusion and at the behest of New Delhi.

45. The law, enacted in 1958, gives powers to the army and State and Central police forces to shoot to kill, search houses and destroy any property that is "likely" to be used by insurgents in areas declared as "disturbed". Security forces can "arrest without warrant" a person, who has committed or is "about to commit a cognizable offence" even on "reasonable suspicion". It also protects them from legal processes for actions taken under the act. "Here are 10 things to know about controversial legislation Afspa", *Hindustan Times*, July 9, 2016, available at: [www.hindustantimes.com](http://www.hindustantimes.com).

(paramilitary forces of the Central government and the Indian Army) from the residential areas of the Valley. The BJP finds it difficult to heed to such demands due to its nationalist baggage, which the Congress party could if it willed it. However, doing so would make a great deal of difference to Kashmiris since, for them, the gun-totting soldier frisking civilians, day after day, represents Indian oppression.

The only BJP leader who played to the Kashmiri nationalist symbolism, if not doing anything about it, was Atal Bihari Vajpayee, who by merely uttering the magic *mantra* that every BJP leader takes refuge in today — “Kashmiriyat, jamhooriyat (democracy), insaniyat (humanity)” — transformed the discourse on the relationship between New Delhi and Srinagar. His words did not lead to any action: the word was the act, and it made a difference. Later on, another encouraging sign emerged when the BJP managed to form a coalition government in the Valley with the ‘soft-separatist’ PDP, despite declaring in its 2014 election manifesto that it would abrogate Article 370. The BJP was able to take that step precisely because it managed to not only go back on its hard-line positions but also address some of the key symbols of Kashmiri nationalism in its “Agenda of Alliance” with the PDP.<sup>46</sup> Unfortunately, the party was not able to pursue that approach.

The earlier Congress regime, on the other hand, was adept at symbolically playing to Kashmiri demands. Most of its Kashmir initiatives from 2004 to 2011 show that it cleverly used symbolism with an occasional sprinkling of substance: Prime Minister Manmohan Singh engaged the separatists without any hesitation (unlike the BJP), organised Round Table Conferences in Kashmir, set up Working Groups on key themes linked to the ‘azadi’ question, and, after the 2010 agitation, sent a group of interlocutors to Kashmir who went out of their way to meet all key separatists in the Valley. While nothing came out of any of these initiatives, Dr. Singh managed to convey to Kashmiris that he was willing to engage them in an ‘out of the box’ manner without riding high on aggressive nationalism.

## The BJP inability to address Pakistan on Kashmir

The BJP’s nationalist baggage also prevents it from talking meaningfully to Pakistan on Kashmir. The India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir is a

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46. “Agenda for Alliance: Full text of the agreement between PDP and BJP”, available at: [www.dnaindia.com](http://www.dnaindia.com).

substantive issue pertaining primarily to the State's territoriality, and yet there are strong symbolic aspects of the dispute that can indeed transcend the substantive claims. Armed with the unavoidable realisation that a territorial change of the Kashmir border is impossible due to a variety of reasons, Pakistan has been looking for an 'honourable exit route' from the Kashmir quagmire, a conflict that has had immeasurable adverse implications for its own society and polity. This explains the thought-process behind the so-called Musharraf formula, a solution that hinges on resolving the bilateral Kashmir dispute without changing its currently existing borders.

Dr. Singh understood the symbolism behind the Musharraf formula and offered to work with the Pakistani leader to "make borders irrelevant" in Kashmir. Both proposals were full of symbolism, with hardly any substantive territorial transformation in it. Dr. Singh was able to pursue it precisely because the symbolism behind his politics, and that of the Congress party, did not clash with the proposed solution.

How fundamental is Kashmir to Pakistan's identity? There was a time when Kashmir was bandied about as the "jugular vein of Pakistan". The country continues to do so, but of late there is a recognition that it needs to focus more on its own internal conflicts rather than Kashmir (though the current stand-off may help reverse it). Pakistan also regularly refers to the UN Resolutions on Kashmir, but that is essentially to put New Delhi on the mat rather than being reflective of its seriousness about the Resolutions, which would require Pakistan to first vacate the J&K territory under its control. In short, it is not impossible for India to address Pakistan's claims on Kashmir, if preceded by a proper peace process. The BJP, however, due to its nationalist baggage and absolutist claims about Kashmir, may find it hard to address Pakistan's need for a 'symbolic resolution' of the Kashmir dispute.

## Domestic political constraints

The BJP's inability to resolve the Kashmir issue also stems from its domestic political compulsions. Having often termed the Kashmiri separatists as "Pakistan-backed terrorists"<sup>47</sup> and then "successfully" sold this line to its loyal constituency at home and on social media, it has become difficult for the BJP to proactively reach out to the separatists.

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47. "Pakistan-Backed Separatists Fomenting Trouble in Jammu & Kashmir: BJP", *Daily News and Analysis*, August 14, 2016, available at: [www.dnaindia.com](http://www.dnaindia.com).

Home Minister Singh, for instance, failed to reach out to the separatists despite two visits to the Valley in August and September 2016.<sup>48</sup>

More importantly, the BJP's Kashmir policy will continue to be dictated by electoral compulsions. Its electoral campaigns tend to ride high (along with the developmental promises) on nationalist symbols, national pride, national power and civilizational greatness. Such high-octane symbolism does not go well with attempts at negotiating with the Kashmiri 'terrorists supported by Pakistan' especially when the party is bracing for Assembly elections in crucial states such as Uttar Pradesh, Punjab and Gujarat in 2017. As a result of this inability to resolve the Kashmir conflict, stemming from ideological reasons, there is a feeling in New Delhi that it is easy to contain the Kashmir issue rather than go through the difficult and costly conflict resolution process. Hard-line strategies then seem to be what the government is depending on.

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48. "Kashmir Unrest: Hurriyat Refuses to Meet Leaders of All-Party Delegation, Lashes out at CM Mehbooba Mufti", *Indian Express*, September 4, 2016, available at: <http://indianexpress.com>.

# What needs to be done?

## Between India and Kashmir

Given the extent of anti-India feelings in the Valley and the belief that New Delhi has never been serious about resolving the Kashmir conflict, it may not be easy at this point to reach out to the Kashmiris. And yet, it is pertinent here to examine the short-term and long-term ways to resolve the conflict. In the short-term, there is a need to repeal or at least amend AFSPA, release political prisoners, institute a broad-based inquiry into extrajudicial killings, and open a result-oriented dialogue with the Valley's dissidents to discuss the larger political questions as promised by the ruling coalition.<sup>49</sup>

In the intermediate term, a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) could be set up in the state to help Kashmiris come to terms with their past and to advance the cause of justice and reconciliation. Both India and Kashmir need to make peace with each other and with their complicated past relationship. However, the most important aspect of this political package should be the adherence to Article 370 of the Constitution in letter and spirit. Most of the key features of the Article have been distorted or removed to such an extent that it is no longer recognisable. Indeed, the National Conference-appointed State Autonomy Committee had, in 1999, recommended that the President of India should strike down all orders that infringe on the 1950 Constitution (Application to J&K) Order, and the Delhi Agreement of 1952.<sup>50</sup> This recommendation was not heeded by the then BJP-led government.<sup>51</sup> It may now be revisited in conjunction with other recommendations from political parties such as the PDP.

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This section borrows from my previous writings, in particular, "Kashmir needs a political package", *The Hindu*, September 22, 2010, available at: [www.thehindu.com](http://www.thehindu.com).

49. H. Jacob, "Living in Denial on Kashmir", *op. cit.*

50. "The State Autonomy Committee: Recommendations. Chapter XIV: Summary of Recommendations". Available at [www.satp.org](http://www.satp.org)

51. S. Bukhari, "NC, NDA and Autonomy", *Ipcs.org*, July 2, 2014, available at: [www.ipcs.org](http://www.ipcs.org).

## Kashmir and India-Pakistan relations

A permanent solution to the Kashmir issue is unlikely to emerge without the involvement of Pakistan. In the longer term, therefore, there is a need to revisit the back-channel decisions reached by the two countries on J&K that can be implemented in the state in consultation with the people of the state. Kashmir easily constitutes the most significant and challenging issue in the India-Pakistan relationship. Whenever bilateral discussions on Kashmir have improved, as was the case between 2003 and 2008, the general bilateral atmosphere has also been positive, and conducive for resolving other conflicts.

Even though both India and Pakistan have in the past come down from their absolutist positions on Kashmir, Pakistan's use of terror as a state policy has been the single most significant cause for the lack of improvement on the Kashmir front. Some analysts have argued that Pakistani security establishment is unlikely to give up on its traditional positions on Kashmir. Sumit Ganguly argues, for instance, that Pakistan is a greedy state and that "its desire for expansion does not stem from guaranteeing its own security. Instead it can be traced to its commitment to incorporate the state of Jammu and Kashmir (...) This irredentist claim has remained a constant in Pakistan's foreign and security policy".<sup>52</sup>

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52. S. Ganguly, *Deadly Impasse: Indo-Pakistani Relations at the Dawn of a New Century*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2016. p. 20.

# Conclusion

The 2016 uprising has shown that the insurgency in Kashmir is far from over. The key reason why the insurgency, which was contained in the mid to late 1990s, started getting a new lease of life is because of the failure of conflict resolution between India and Pakistan as well as India's political mishandling of the internal dimensions of the Kashmir conflict. Today the Indian State faces a major security threat from the repeated uprisings in Kashmir even though the government in New Delhi doesn't seem to have seriously diagnosed its implications. Had it done so, its response to crises in Kashmir would have been different.

The current policy of using force to dissuade protesters and of waiting for them to tire out doesn't seem like a long-term strategy. An unmanaged rebellion in Kashmir could prove to be expensive for India due to a variety of external factors. Pakistan's behaviour in the past one year has shown that it would utilize any given opportunity to fan the flames in Kashmir both materially and politically. More significantly, with the new insurgency showing clear signs of being influenced by religious dogmas, unlike in the later 1980s and early 1990s, New Delhi would be ill-advised not to resolve the conflict politically while it still can. The ISIS factor, though not yet a serious threat in the context of Kashmir, could potentially make the insurgency harder to handle in the years ahead.

While it is true that the Pakistani involvement has ensured that the Kashmiri demands are still heard by New Delhi and the international community, it is also true that Pakistani involvement has made it difficult for New Delhi to make any concessions due to domestic political/electoral implications. In other words, had the Kashmir issue not had a Pakistan angle to it, it would have been easier for the government in New Delhi to resolve it. Paradoxically, however, it would have not have bothered with Kashmir had there been no Pakistan angle to it.

The BJP government recently signed a peace accord with NSCN (IM), the Naga insurgents in the northeast of the country, which has been demanding for "a 'Greater Nagalim' comprising 'all contiguous Naga-inhabited areas', along with Nagaland", including several districts of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh and Manipur, "as also a large tract of

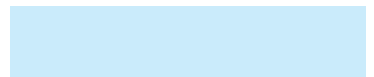
Myanmar”.<sup>53</sup> This shows that the government in Delhi was able to make peace with NSCN (IM) because of the lack of domestic political costs and external angle to the issue. But there is nothing to indicate that Pakistan is likely to wind down its involvement in Kashmir in the days ahead.

Conflict resolution in J&K is easier said than done. Since the beginning of 2016 and especially since the outbreak of the latest uprising in Kashmir, India and Pakistan have hardened their positions. There is hardly any talk about the Musharraf formula or the back-channel parleys. New Delhi and Islamabad have reverted to their hard-line positions on Kashmir. This will pose a major challenge for the bilateral resolution of the conflict over Kashmir.

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53. S. Gupta Kashyap, “Towards the Govt-Naga Peace Accord: Everything you Need to Know”, *Indian Express*, August 4, 2015, available at: <http://indianexpress.com>.





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