

WHY PREVALENCE OF PEACE IN KASHMIR CORRELATES WITH AFGHANISTAN

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ABSTRACT

This study evaluates the conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and provides analysis of the impact it has on peace in Afghanistan. It further expatiates on why Pakistan and India have been continuously claiming relative ownership of the valley (Kashmir), which in effect has culminated in three dimensions: Making the Kashmir conflict tied to the so-called militancy, future security of Afghanistan and what role India would play considering the trilogy. Furthermore, due to existing barbed relations between India and Pakistan, Afghanistan continues to be a battlefield for these two regional hegemons. In effect, this conflict destabilizes Afghanistan scene and breeds the insurgency in the region to a protracted extent. The deployment these two archrivals in Afghanistan in essence embodies offensive realism. Ergo, if Pakistan sees India's power growth in Afghanistan as being a threat, it could open up conflict in the Kashmir territory, which to all appearances catalyze escalation in more militancy serving no side good. Against this backdrop, India therefore, cannot be as much of use in building security in Afghanistan until the Kashmir conflict is fully settled.

KEYWORDS: *Immanent impacts of the Kashmir conflict on Afghanistan, future of Afghanistan security, extremist militancy, Pakistan and India claim over Kashmir.*

INTRODUCTION

Conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir and provides analysis of the impact it has on peace in Afghanistan. It further expatiates on why Pakistan and India have been continuously claiming relative ownership of the valley (Kashmir), which in effect has culminated in three dimensions: Making the Kashmir conflict tied to the so-called militancy, future security of Afghanistan and what role India would play considering the trilogy. Furthermore, due to existing barbed relations between India and Pakistan, Afghanistan continues to be a battlefield for these two regional hegemons. In effect, this conflict destabilizes Afghanistan scene and breeds the insurgency in the region to a protracted extent. The deployment these two archrivals in Afghanistan in essence embodies offensive realism. Ergo, if Pakistan sees India's power growth in Afghanistan as being a threat, it could open up conflict in the Kashmir territory, which to all appearances catalyze escalation in more militancy serving no side good. Against this backdrop, India therefore, cannot be as much of use in building security in Afghanistan until the Kashmir conflict is fully settled.

The primary purpose of this paper is to show how lack of stability in Kashmir is relatively tied to the insecurity in Afghanistan considering the running battle between India and Pakistan. One of the most fundamental and perplexing issues among the international community particularly the U.S is how

to bring about peace and stability in*Afghanistan, however being taken hostage by regional actors, namely two of its major allies India and Pakistan who are involved in this ongoing battle. The Kashmir conflict is an important component of a resource battle between India and Pakistan, which is often disguised as an ethnic or religious war. The paper also examines the impact of the ongoing conflict in Kashmir and its actuary effects on U.S efforts to stabilize Afghanistan. Is prevalence of peace in Kashmir intertwined with instability in Afghanistan?

The war in*Afghanistan is the most protracted conflict the U.S has ever been embroiled in. As the U.S. winds down its war efforts in Afghanistan, it hopes to secure a functioning government with sufficient resources to asphyxiate terrorist safe-sanctuaries in the region. President Obama remarked that "One of the single greatest threats to the U.S is terrorist safe havens along the border region of Pakistan and Afghanistan (Anand Bazar Patrika , 17 Apr 2012). Critical U.S interests in the region are to ensure a radical takeover of the Afghanistan government by extremist and other irregular forces does not realize". While there are several factors that influence instability in Afghanistan, this investigation solely explores how the Kashmir conflict shapes the actions of Pakistan and India in Afghanistan that could undermine U.S objectives in the region. Self-interested states. (Usher, 2009, 21) Graham Usher points out that Pakistan has used

Afghanistan as a staging area for proxy soldiers to wage war in Kashmir and now shelters Taliban leadership in tribal areas cocoons. He further notes that India is engaged in several infrastructure projects to build up Afghanistan in an effort to desiccate terrorist safe havens as well as to dominate Central Asian trade routes. The more India tries to reconstruct Afghanistan, the more concerns Pakistan has of India opening up a second front along its western border to check India's headway in the region. (Bhatnagar and Ahmad) This security competition between these two regional powers is a classic case of offensive realism at work. The implications for the U.S are that a delicate foreign policy with Pakistan and India must be crafted. If the U.S can apply double-edged pressure on India and Pakistan to resolve their Kashmir dispute, this frees the resources that each side can use to provide greater security and stability to the South Asia region as a whole.

KASHMIR CONFLICT IMMANENT ON AFGHANISTAN

The Kashmir conflict impacts Afghanistan in at least three significant ways. Kashmir is tied to so-called militancy, future security of Afghanistan, and what role India plays considering the trilogy. As long as pungent relations prosecute between India and Pakistan over Kashmir, Afghanistan continues to be a staging area between the two regional hegemony. This offensive realism conflict between India and Pakistan destabilizes Afghanistan scene and supplant the chronic insurgency to deeper stages. India expends a vast amount of resources securing Kashmir and building Afghanistan. These resources could be deployed elsewhere and could better serve as a check to its rivals far afield (China). Over and above, the final status of Kashmir continues to be a central regional issue that keeps the Central Asia region from obtaining a meaningful security. The U.S should view relations between India and Pakistan, as well as the situation in Kashmir, as a critical foreign policy issue. Evidence in the form of multiple, high-level visits suggests that this may now be the case. Past U.S engagements has primarily been relegated to crisis management as opposed to a sophisticated, committed, and sustained strategy. In the aftermath of 9/11, and the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq, as well as the nuclearization of the region, it is in the interest of the U.S to articulate a longer-term strategy to deal with the Kashmiri conflict for security and economic purposes. A moderate, progressive, and stable Pakistan, as well as South Asia, is in the short- and long-term interests of the U.S. Immediate steps to reverse the escalatory dynamic of the conflict and to encourage movement toward dialogue should be taken by the parties. India and Pakistan should not jump into formal, highly publicized talks but rather embark upon back-channel steps to

begin defining what talks would be looking like. Back-channel dialogue on issues such as security, humanitarian issues, and peace dividends should begin, defining necessary and agreeable building blocks to move toward a final solution. Formal bilateral confidence-building measures agreed upon at the official and unofficial levels can help effect a new process by setting into place the building blocks for an eventual agreement, targeting substantive issues such as reducing and removing troops from uncontested areas and implementing technical safeguards to monitor infiltration from both sides.

During his tenure, President Obama constantly reiterated that "One of America's greatest threats is terrorist safe havens along the Afghanistan / Pakistan border. (Usher, 21) The threat of future militancy coming out of Afghanistan is of concern for the U.S. The 9/11 attack planning did originate in Afghanistan." Therefore, drawing on any meta-legal instruments by any side to burgeon proxy war in Kashmir farther escalated already existing impasses between the two countries. The overall long-term security of Afghanistan is tied to the cooperation of its immediate neighbors in supporting nation building. The more secure the Ghani led government becomes the more havoc is wreaked to it by its immediate neighbors undermining its security. As an instance, Pakistan's predominantly advantageous geographic position assists or blocks the flow of supplies into Afghanistan. Routinely, supply convoys are held up and made it difficult for the movement of equipment from the sea to landlocked Afghanistan. Similarly, some Afghanistan neighbors want a government in Afghanistan that can be easily controlled, where to the contrary a strong and independent Afghan government hampers their ability to run militant groups with open hand - something they never want to realize. Afghanistan's neighbors behave this way because they are executing a realist policy to gain power and security over their rivals.

On the other hand, the U.S in planning ahead for the long-term security of the entire region, is looking to India to take up security duties seeing it a useful ally in checking the power growth of China.

EXTREMIST MILITANCY

Afghanistan has been a breeding ground for Islamic fundamentalism, as far back as the 1970s. Pakistan initially created the guerilla groups for retaliation of Afghanistan for shoring up an insurgency in the Pakistani province of Baluchistan. Over decades, several different groups for different security needs in the region later using these guerillas in the years to come. The CIA and Saudi Arabia used the guerillas to push the USSR out of Afghanistan. After the USSR forces departure from Afghanistan, Pakistan routinely

drew on the guerillas that fought against the Soviets to wage proxy war against India in Kashmir and conducted attacks in greater India.

Pakistan continued holding its grasp over the mujahedin (freedom fighters), who would be later on redirected to fight in Kashmir. (Larry and Peter 2012) Since 1991, the camps in Afghanistan that had been used to train militants to fight the USSR forces were now being used to fight Indians in Kashmir.

In the aftermath of collapse of the communist regime in Afghanistan, Islamic extremism has substituted as a primary menace to the region, despite which Afghanistan's neighbors have been lackadaisical in stopping support to Islamic militancy at the detriment of their interests.

A statement made by U.S authorities in 2002, indicated that there were indications of Islamic extremist fighters penetrating the Kashmir territory. (Shankar, 2002) After the collapse of the Taliban, many fighters affiliated to the movement fled to Kashmir. It was estimated in 2002 that there were as many as 300 fighters operating in the Kashmir territory, dismantling and infiltration of whom became one of prime objectives of the Global War on Terror. On the other hand, Indian officials stressed that if militant groups funding continues, then there would not be any stoppage of the spread of insurgents into the Kashmir providing the ground for continuation of Islamic militarism and further deterioration of the political relations between the two countries (Ibid).

As a result of inattention and lack of a long-term strategy by the Western World post USSR conflict in Afghanistan in 1990s, Islamic extremist groups were able to regrow in strength and remain unchecked. They were able to use arms left by the Soviets, use funds from narco-trade and use resources provided by Pakistan seeing them panacea to its existential concerns. That culminated in their spill into Kashmir and take the Islamic fundamentalist fight against the Hindus.

Pakistan supports the Kashmir insurgency because it serves their strategic objectives on one hand, and caters to strengthen its offensive realism goals on the other. Pakistan cannot openly attack India or use its own troops to destabilize and weaken Afghanistan, instead, it exploits Islamic militant networks to conduct attacks in Afghanistan, Kashmir and India. (Hanouar and Chalk) This evidence again corroborates offensive realism being at work. The U.S. goals in Afghanistan are to persist over creating an independent state that is strong enough to stand on its own which is in direct contrast to Afghanistan's immediate neighbors' goals. Afghanistan neighbors particularly Pakistan, desires a satellite state in

Kabul that can be easily influenced over. This influence can then be wielded to support a permissive environment where extremists groups can operate and an Afghan government that reduces Indian political and economic efforts prevail. (Ibid) Pakistan has continued to support Taliban resurgence by enabling its sanctuaries and providing political support for Taliban reconciliation talks with Afghanistan.

The U.S continues to only achieve momentary success in disrupting terrorist networks by reason that existing Islamic militant groups are funded by Pakistan. An Afghan state that is pro-Pakistan can give Pakistan the strategic depth it needs in its fight against India. Pakistan can then be free and clear like it was in the 1990s, to have a rear base in which it can train and furnish militants to fight in Kashmir. The proxy soldiers conducting jihadist attacks against India is one of the forefront tenets of Pakistan's foreign policy. (Ibid) Pakistan's intelligence agency has been waging this war against India for nearly fifty years. The U.S cannot simply seek a Pakistani foreign policy change that goes against its actual foreign interests. The U.S cannot be unsuccessful in changing Pakistan's foreign policy behavior until relations between India and Pakistan improve.

To try and persuade states sponsor of terrorism in taking on a greater role in combating Islamic militancy, the U.S. has engaged in some quiet diplomacy in the Kashmir conflict with opponent parties. Some U.S authorities has supported Indian government talks with the Kashmir separatist groups.

FUTURE SECURITY OF AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan has become a place that Pakistan and India endeavor to avow strength over the other. It is a frontline where both search to gain a geopolitical defense and promote favorable economic activities while denying the other of the same objectives. (Ibid) Their offensive realism goals complicate efforts to place Afghanistan on a path toward sustainment and self-rule free from outside influences. All the U.S can try and do is to contain the situation between India and Pakistan. The U.S is unable to advance its own goals as India and Pakistan crash and undermine the politics and landscape of the region in support of their own agendas separate from the U.S. This helps explicate why the conflict in Afghanistan has now become the longest conflict in which the U.S. has been floundered.

The future of Afghanistan becoming a stable, functioning state or remaining a fragmented place of mayhem is to some extent tied to the relations between India and Pakistan. Afghanistan cannot be put on path to sustainment and self-efficacy without relieving the tensions between the two powers in the region. As long as Pakistan has a fear of India, it

continues to undermine security efforts in Afghanistan. U.S authorities are of the view that a solution to the Kashmir conflict is the surety to assuage the fears of Pakistan. Only when Pakistan and India are on good relations the need for militancy disappear and the meddling in Afghanistan for state self-interest change to building an effective and functioning Afghanistan.

Pakistan views Afghanistan as its strategic backyard and does not bend to any Indian influence in the region. (Shappenfield and Shahan) India has already dismembered Pakistan once before in supporting the spin-off of Bangladesh. If India gains a strong position in Afghanistan it can be in a position to influence Pakistan on both sides of the border and potentially further dismembers Pakistan. Islamabad has gone to great lengths to check Indian influence in Afghanistan.

The current situation to a remarkably large extent does not change until Pakistan resolves its rivalry with India. (Tepperman, 2010) The issue of the final state of Kashmir is a central concern that keeps India and Pakistan poised for conflict with each other.

The majority of Pakistan's troops are along the Indian border and the Line of Control (LoC) in the Kashmir region. It is the fear of India that keeps Pakistan from moving troops from the Indian border to secure and watch the Afghanistan border. (Ibid) This rivalry has caused both nations to develop nuclear weapons and deploy a million troops on their border region. The (Nyer, 1980) hard power that both sides own has taken them into an offensive realism struggle of security competition. The possession of nuclear weapons has made conventional conflict obsolete. Both sides have turned to Afghanistan to further their foreign policy goals. India is seeking a strong Afghan state that would cause Pakistan to have to shift troops. Inversely, Pakistan desires a weak Afghan state to secure its future agendas of a protectorate to its advantage.

India has been a significant partner in Afghanistan reconstruction efforts. Delhi has assisted in building roads, electricity grids, has opened four consulates and has given \$1.2 billion aid package to the Afghan government. This is a generous investment to a Muslim nation from a secular predominately Hindu nation. Some of the roads India has been building connect Afghanistan to the Iranian port of Chabahar. This bypasses the Pakistani port of Karachi and gives India access to trade with Afghanistan without having to deal with any overland issues of Pakistan blocking Afghan, Indian trade. These efforts are part of India's realism goals to gain influence and power in Afghanistan. An economically strong

government in Afghanistan does not serve the foreign policy goals of its other neighbors who see their interests challenged.

The mismatch of Indian and Pakistani goals for Afghanistan causes friction and potential for conflict. This friction is caused by two rivals executing a realism policy in the region. Realism edicts a security competition and as part of this competition there is conflict between India and Pakistan. As much as the U.S. would like India to take on a bigger role in Afghanistan nation building, it is reluctant to widen its footprint over concerns of retaliation and other undermining efforts from Pakistan. So, if Pakistan suffers a strategic defeat in Afghanistan by India's emerging power, there it may be tempted to go for more attacks on India.

PAKISTAN AND INDIA'S CLAIMS OVER KASHMIR

Pakistan and India have an interest in Kashmir for three main reasons each. The reasons have their own context and span different lengths of time. They have different actors managing them and employ varying strategies to accomplish them. Despite the variation in the reasons they all have the same end state. The objective in Kashmir is to bring it under full control and be absorbed into the state of Pakistan or India. Bringing Kashmir to be a part of Pakistan or India has been a central theme in the regional politics since 1947.

The first reason Pakistan has an interest in Kashmir is through a religious context. By the general policy of partition of Kashmir, being a majority Muslim state, should have acceded to Pakistan and joined the rest of the Muslims there. The Kashmir ruling maharaja choose to accede to India even though the majority of Kashmiris are Muslims. This perplexed the Pakistanis as they viewed themselves as being a protector of Muslims in the region. Islamists throughout the region had worked many years trying to restore Muslim rule in Kashmir. (Jamal, 2009) They would be betrayed by Maharaja Hari Singh's decision to assent to India where Kashmir would be outside the protection of Pakistan. The second reason Pakistan maintains a claim in Kashmir is administrative. Pakistan was only able to provide representation without input or protest to the British plan of partition and the marking of boundaries. Pakistan, therefore, does not recognize Indian claims to Kashmir. Pakistan also had already entered into a written "standstill" agreement with the maharaja of Kashmir that India was also offered and declined to do so. Pakistan maintains debate and protest on the drawing of borderlines, treaties and agreements that the British set up, and India and Kashmir have arranged with each other. The maharaja signing of the standstill agreement in 1947, was to buy time and camouflage the real plan to align with India. The standstill agreement led Pakistan and its supporters into a false reality.

The Muslim League in Kashmir was under the impression that they would become part of Pakistan when Kashmir became independent on August 14, 1947. On this date, the Muslim League rejoiced and even hoisted the Pakistani flag over several Kashmiri post offices. The ruling maharaja ordered all the flags taken down and the Muslim League's hopes of becoming part of Pakistan were dashed. This disappointment created a sequence of events and unrest that is still evident today. The last reason is strategic in nature. This particular claim is the most closely related to the execution of realism policy. Pakistan holds on to the Kashmir dispute for internal and external reasons. Politicians use the Kashmir issue for political gain and use it to rally support for their own political agendas. Pakistan also wants to control the entire territory of Kashmir for a strategic buffer zone. India is viewed as the main threat to Pakistan and the addition of any territory will give greater border security. As the decades have passed since partition, Pakistan also maintains the claim to the Kashmir territory as part of a bigger offensive realism struggle against its main rival India. Finally, Kashmir is the lifeblood of Pakistan's water resources and the headwater of the Indus river valley system. Control of the Indus river valley is a strategic objective to assure water resource security and sustenance to the health of Pakistan.

CONCLUSION

The notion of offensive realism has created a huge amount of conflict and fear among arch foes like Pakistan and India in the region. The regional stakeholders have invested large amounts of resources in managing this foreign policy strategy among emerging hegemony. This strategy has resulted in lengthiness of instability and strife in the Kashmir region. The utilization of militancy and the development of militant fastness in the region have negatively impacted all the sides alike. India and Pakistan strain their resources in checking and counter-checking each other. Then the biggest problem for the U.S. is its inability to establish a stable Afghanistan because proxy forces in play typically have held hostage U.S. strategic goals in the span of past seventeen years.

In the wake of U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan, there is substantial fear for a security vacuum in the region. India is a country that has the resources to provide regional stability in the region, but as a remarkable amount of its resources are drained away by an obsessive struggle against Pakistan. The competition between India and Pakistan tumbles into Afghanistan as both countries endeavor to make takeover bid over each other. Both sides fight finger to the bone to have ascendant influence in Afghanistan either by playing the proxy foot soldiers in the case of Pakistan or reconstruction and building infra-structure in the position of India.

A major part of this fratricidal game tries to answer the question of what will be the final status of Kashmir. Both sides are obsessed in maintaining a claim since 1947, over Kashmir. The contest will continue until the key players come to terms over Kashmir this way or another and pave the way to a mutual approach to the future to be a way out of this Gordian knot. Peace will be only achievable as long as a lasting solution is sought and agreed upon for Kashmir among the potential stakeholders.

It's strongly presumed that if a comprehensive solution found to the Kashmir dilemma, a long-term victory would be guaranteed for all parties involved.

Soon after Kashmiris find the space after decades-long conflict and turmoil to live in peace with each other, then Pakistan and India can divert their national strengths towards other tenacious concerns. On the other hand, the tensions along the Pakistan / India border would substantially be relieved, the constancy of Afghanistan's stability increases thereafter, as India and Pakistan would commence working together and coupling returns on valuable resource trade. The U.S. would achieve a stronger strategic partner as India is able to redeploy assets that will have a larger ability to contribute in the security of the Indian Ocean through anti-piracy patrols and serve in a more effective capacity as both partners so desire in checking the growth of China. A solution to the Kashmir conflict is a win-win for the U.S. and all patrons in the region.

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