
Introduction

by MATTHEW A. ROSENSTEIN

October 2007 marked the sixtieth anniversary of the initiation of the conflict between India and Pakistan over Jammu and Kashmir (J&K). This timeframe equates roughly to three generations of people living under uncertainty in all parts of J&K, and three generations of Indians, Pakistanis, and the international community failing to reach consensus on how to resolve the questions underlying this seemingly intractable dispute. Although a “final solution” for J&K has consistently remained unattainable during this long and sometimes violent period, the arguments and strategies on both sides have not remained static, nor have the attitudes and behaviors of the people of J&K as they experienced shifts in their economic and political surroundings.

Today, there is a peace process in place between India and Pakistan. Though this process is comprehensive and includes various issues, there has been prominent focus on J&K. At the popular level, both countries have agreed to open the Line of Control (LoC) and allow limited interactions. People of divided families living along the LoC, especially in the regions of Jammu, Kashmir Valley, and Muzaffarabad, have been allowed to meet each other. Politically, both India and Pakistan have proposed new ideas, clearly showing a shift from their stated positions. Both Pakistani President Pervez Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh have underlined the need to make borders (including the LoC) soft and even irrelevant. The opening of the LoC immediately after the devastating earthquake in October 2005 and the two bus services (between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad; and Rawlakot and Poonch) are a part of this new process. At the security level, both countries have been sincerely pursuing their ceasefire and there have been no incidents between the two militaries across the LoC since 2004. There have been reports at the highest level within India regarding reduction in cross-border infiltration. These are the achievements so far.

However, this is only a part of the story. At the popular level, interactions across the LoC are still

minimal, and are focused only on the divided families in the aforementioned three regions. The other regions—Kargil, Leh, Skardu, and Gilgit—are totally left out of these popular interactions. There is an increasing demand from all regions of J&K to open the LoC for trade and commerce. Politically, there is an internal peace process between New Delhi and various sections in Jammu and Kashmir. However, this process is not inclusive, as the separatist and militant groups fall outside the dialogue. On Pakistan’s side, such a process is yet to be undertaken between Islamabad and Muzaffarabad. The Northern Areas so far have not become a part of any peace process—internal, bilateral, or cross-LoC. In terms of security, despite the decline in cross-border infiltration, violence in the Indian part of J&K continues. These are the challenges.

The collection of articles contained in this issue trace historical developments of various aspects of the Kashmir conflict, and present analyses and recommendations regarding what policy approaches might emerge from this point. The contributors—from India, Pakistan, the United States, and Kashmir itself—offer perspectives about the interests of each of these stakeholders and the international community, including China—another claimant to land in J&K. Above all, this issue of *Swords and Ploughshares* examines the many challenges, but also opportunities, associated with Kashmir, and highlights potential avenues for resolving the conflict in the context of contemporary Indo-Pak relations and against the backdrop of current conditions in J&K.

Suba Chandran’s article reminds us that “the Kashmir conflict” can actually refer to two conflicts—one focused primarily on the disagreement between India and Pakistan, and another centered on the relationship of the people and institutions in Indian administered regions of J&K to the Indian central government. Chandran examines India’s policies, concluding that New Delhi must include more diverse Kashmiri interlocutors in its dialogues, and should exercise greater practicality and flexibility in its negotiations with Pakistan. Next, Rifaat Hussain explores the historical evolution of Pakistan’s official position with respect to J&K up until the present, with particular focus on the perceived shift since 1999 under Pervez Musharraf. As this issue goes to press, Pakistan finds itself at a political crossroads domestically. Hussain cautiously suggests that Pakistan’s new outlook in the Kashmir dispute could signal opportunities for future progress, although much depends on the how the current uncertain political situation will unfold. The next article, by Mehraj Hajni, provides a Kashmiri scholar’s perspective. Hajni offers insight into militancy and governance problems in the region. Although grounded by its treatment of these challenging trends, Hajni’s

article lends a note of optimism with his vision for a more peaceful and prosperous J&K.

Ambassador Howard Schaffer, who has studied and experienced South Asian diplomacy throughout his distinguished career in the U.S. Foreign Service and beyond, examines the international community's efforts over time to assist in resolving the Kashmir issue. His article provides a balanced discussion of the present openings and pitfalls for the United States and other actors to facilitate a settlement. Although China, another stakeholder in the dispute, has for some time now professed neutrality after earlier alignment with Pakistan, Jabin Jacob points to Chinese strategic and economic interests that would benefit from a resolution.

Dipankar Sengupta shows how the Kashmir conflict has taken its toll in the form of harsh economic realities, especially since the onset of insurgency in the 1990s. Sengupta's findings hold important implications regarding participatory economic policymaking and entrepreneurship versus top-down development packages. Seema Sridhar examines the potential economic advantages of enhanced cooperation on water management issues in J&K. While demonstrating that one can legitimately term Kashmir a resource conflict, she shows that the restraint and cooperation displayed by India and Pakistan over water suggests a basis for confidence-building already exists.

One acknowledgment is in order. Suba Chandran from the Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies in New Delhi played a central role in conceptualizing and developing this collection of articles. His communications with several contributors and his editorial skills proved vital. Although any errors associated with this issue should rightly be attributed to me, tremendous credit is due to Suba, and especially his passionate commitment to improving conditions in J&K, for this issue seeing the light of day.

Finally, a few words about ACDIS at the University of Illinois. For nearly thirty years, ACDIS has made important contributions to dialogue about South Asian security issues. In that time, ACDIS has produced extensive resources about a wide range of problems relevant to South Asian security, including numerous scholarly monographs and edited collections, nearly seventy *Occasional Papers* and *Research Reports*, and several previous issues of *Swords and Ploughshares*. Many of these materials are available on the program's web site, <http://www.acdis.uiuc.edu>. As ACDIS approaches its thirtieth anniversary, the program remains committed to the study of South Asian security problems, while continuing to foster exciting new initiatives in other aspects of international security.

