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The Kashmir Issue in the Context of Recent Conflicts Historical Legacies, Water Security, and Regional Stability

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BASED ON

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Historical Legacies, Water Security, and Regional
Stability



ABOUT THE SERIES

The DCA Academic Brief Series presents concise and accessible summaries of scholarly discussions hosted or supported by the Diyanet Center of America. The series seeks to make academic scholarship available to wider audiences engaged in religious education and community learning.

Executive Summary

The Kashmir dispute remains one of the world's longest-running territorial conflicts and continues to shape security dynamics in South Asia. Although the conflict originated during the partition of British India in 1947, it has evolved beyond a territorial disagreement into a multidimensional issue involving constitutional change, water security, demographic transformation, and regional geopolitics.

This study examines the structural factors that have intensified the conflict, particularly in light of the military confrontation between India and Pakistan in 2025. It argues that recent clashes should be understood as manifestations of deeper historical and political dynamics rather than isolated incidents. The suspension of the Indus Waters Treaty, the revocation of Kashmir's special constitutional status, and competing interpretations of international law have further complicated prospects for lasting peace.

The study concludes that the Kashmir issue has become a comprehensive regional security challenge involving not only India and Pakistan but also broader questions of resource governance, political legitimacy, and strategic stability.

Rather than viewing ambiguity as a methodological obstacle, the study proposes that ambiguity constitutes an essential feature of Ottoman religious life. Examining religious communities through historically grounded, interdisciplinary, and self-reflexive approaches offers a more nuanced understanding of identity, belief, and communal formation within one of the world's most diverse imperial societies.

KEY POINTS

- Kashmir has evolved from a territorial dispute into a multidimensional security issue.
- The 2025 India–Pakistan confrontation demonstrated the continuing risk of military escalation between two nuclear powers.

- Water governance has become a strategic dimension of the conflict through the Indus River System.
- Constitutional reforms and demographic changes have intensified political tensions within Kashmir.
- Historical grievances and competing legal interpretations continue to hinder conflict resolution.

CENTRAL QUESTION

Why does the Kashmir dispute continue to generate instability despite decades of diplomatic efforts?

CORE ARGUMENT

The persistence of the Kashmir conflict reflects the interaction of historical legacies, constitutional developments, hydro-politics, and regional security competition.

MAIN CONTRIBUTION

The study connects recent military developments with the broader historical, legal, and geopolitical dimensions of the Kashmir dispute.

PRIMARY AUDIENCE

Scholars of international relations, South Asian politics, security studies, international law, and conflict resolution.

1. Why This Study Matters

Kashmir remains one of the most strategically sensitive regions in South Asia due to its geopolitical location, contested sovereignty, and shared water resources. The renewed military confrontation between India and Pakistan in 2025 illustrates that the dispute continues to threaten regional stability despite decades of diplomatic engagement.

Rather than treating recent clashes as isolated events, the study emphasizes the importance of understanding the historical and structural factors that sustain the conflict. Examining constitutional change, hydro-politics, and competing legal claims provides a more comprehensive understanding of why the Kashmir issue remains unresolved.

KEY INSIGHT

The Kashmir conflict is no longer solely a territorial dispute but a multidimensional challenge shaped by history, security, water governance, and constitutional change.

2. Historical Background of the Kashmir Dispute

The Kashmir dispute originated during the partition of British India in 1947. Although the region had a predominantly Muslim population, its ruler chose to accede to India, triggering the first Indo-Pakistani War. Since then, Kashmir has remained divided between India and Pakistan, while the proposed UN-supervised plebiscite has never been implemented. These unresolved historical developments continue to shape the positions of the parties today.

KEY INSIGHT

The unresolved decisions of 1947 continue to define the political and legal foundations of the conflict.

3. Water Security and Regional Competition

Beyond territorial claims, the Kashmir dispute has increasingly become a contest over water resources. As the source of the Indus River System, Kashmir holds strategic importance for both India and Pakistan. Recent tensions surrounding the Indus Waters Treaty demonstrate that water is no longer simply a shared natural resource but an important element of regional security and political leverage. Climate change and growing water demand further increase the strategic value of the region.

KEY INSIGHT

Water governance has become one of the most significant strategic dimensions of the Kashmir conflict.

4. Constitutional Change and Escalating Tensions

The revocation of Jammu and Kashmir's special constitutional status in 2019 marked a significant turning point in the conflict. According to the study, subsequent administrative and demographic changes intensified political tensions and reinforced competing narratives regarding sovereignty and self-determination. Together with the 2025 military confrontation, these developments illustrate how constitutional reforms continue to influence regional stability.

KEY INSIGHT

Constitutional reforms have reshaped both the domestic and international dimensions of the Kashmir dispute.

Concluding Reflections

The Kashmir dispute continues to shape the security architecture of South Asia through the interaction of historical grievances, competing sovereignty claims, and emerging geopolitical challenges. Recent military confrontations demonstrate that the conflict remains highly volatile, particularly given the involvement of nuclear-armed states. The study argues that sustainable peace requires addressing not only territorial disputes but also issues related to water governance, constitutional arrangements, and the political aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Academic Contributions

This Academic Brief makes four principal contributions:

- It explains the historical foundations of the Kashmir dispute within the broader context of the partition of British India.
- It highlights the growing importance of **hydro-politics** and the Indus River System in regional security.
- It analyzes the impact of constitutional reforms and demographic changes on recent tensions.
- It demonstrates how the 2025 clashes reflect long-term structural dynamics rather than an isolated security crisis.

Selected References

- United Nations Security Council. *Resolution 47 (1948)*.
- Indus Waters Treaty (1960).
- Relevant literature on South Asian security, hydro-politics, and the Kashmir conflict as referenced in the original study.

Source Study

Primary Source

The Kashmir Issue in the Context of Recent Conflicts
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This academic brief is an accessible presentation of the principal themes and arguments developed in the source study. It does not replace the full scholarly text or its detailed references.

Editorial Note

This brief is intended for educational use. It summarizes a scholarly discussion without presenting the Diyanet Center of America as a policy institute, think tank, or body issuing binding academic judgments.

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