

Maksym LOHARZHEVSKYI

Charles Univ. in Prague, Czechia

THE JAMMU AND KASHMIR CONFLICT: ITS CURRENT STATE AND PROSPECTS

Abstract:

The Kashmir dispute is among the longest disputes of the modern era, which has defined regional politics in South Asia and world geopolitical dynamics. This essay examines its historical origins, strategic lessons, and what it portends for the new world order and the Russian-Ukrainian war. Here are also underscored how border conflicts, economic projects such as the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, and military alliances impact global stability. Additionally, the key lessons drawn from the Kashmir dispute—such as the limits of military solutions, the importance of bilateral dialogue, and the role of international mediation—are examined in the context of the Russian-Ukrainian war. There are also explored how shifting zones of influence may affect Russia’s geopolitical standing, considering China’s cautious support, India’s strategic autonomy, and Pakistan’s balancing act. Finally, the Kashmir dispute is not just a national concern but also a potential trigger for global geopolitical change, addressed in the essay to a significant extent.

Key words:

Jammu and Kashmir, India-Pakistan conflict, China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, Post-Potsdam-Yalta World Order, Russian-Ukrainian war

INTRODUCTION

The Jammu and Kashmir conflict (see Picture 1) stands as one of the most enduring territorial disputes in modern history, involving three nuclear-armed nations—India, Pakistan, and China. Since its origins in the partition of British India in 1947, the dispute has led to multiple wars, insurgencies, and diplomatic tensions, reflecting both regional

and global strategic interests. Also, this conflict is not only about national sovereignty but particularly about ethnic identity, religious divisions, and competing geopolitical aspirations.

At its core, the conflict stems from the partition of British India, which left Jammu and Kashmir—a Muslim-majority region ruled by a Hindu Maharaja—caught between India and Pakistan. The first Indo-Pakistani war (1947–1948) led to the establishment of the Line of Control, which divided Kashmir into territories controlled by both nations. Over the decades, the region has witnessed further wars (1965, 1971, and 1999), political turmoil, and rising militancy.

Moreover, beyond South Asia, the Kashmir dispute has significant implications for the evolving global order. China's increasing economic and military involvement, particularly through CPEC, has tied the conflict to its broader strategic rivalry with India. The growing India-U.S. partnership, Pakistan's deepening alliance with China, and Russia's shifting geopolitical alignments all add complexity. It is within this context that China, India, and Pakistan, as significant world powers deeply intertwined with the Jammu and Kashmir conflict, possess the potential to influence the structure of the emerging New World Order and the trajectory of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

I believe that this influence stems from several key factors. Firstly, the actions of China, India, and Pakistan in relation to Jammu and Kashmir directly impact regional stability and power dynamics. Also, because these three countries are main players in Jammu and Kashmir, it gives them tools to influence international relations. Consequently, developments in the region, particularly the shifts in alliances and influence, inevitably play a role in the ongoing redistribution of "influence zones" within the emerging post-Potsdam-Yalta world order.

Hence, it is my deep conviction that the Kashmir conflict's evolution could play a crucial role in reshaping global spheres of influence. And, by analyzing historical lessons from the conflict—such as the limits of military solutions, the role of diplomatic negotiations, and the involvement of external actors—parallels can be drawn with the Russian-Ukrainian

war. Additionally, I will explore whether lessons from Kashmir's prolonged stalemate could inform strategies for resolving the Ukraine conflict and how the redistribution of geopolitical power in South Asia may indirectly impact Russia's strategic position.

Pic. 1: India-Pakistan Conflict, 2019



Source: The Skimm, retrieved February 9, 2025, from https://www.theskimm.com/next/image?url=https%3A%2F%2Fimages.ctfassets.net%2F6g4gfm8wk7b6%2F6J1P7imF1b7PQSWOziQLwD%2F2447aee08a6a931daaa2a95ee047c0ed%2FIndia-Pakistan_map.png&w=1080&q=100

HISTORY AND COURSE OF THE CONFLICT

It is my deep conviction that to understand something, you need to firstly understand its history, since only in the historical light the thing or event can be viewed overarchingly, and, therefore, the appropriate lessons and prospects can be made and established. Hence, I want to start this essay with the general overview of the Jammu and Kashmir conflict, which roots trace back to the mid-19th century.

Namely, in this century, under the Treaty of Amritsar in 1846, the region was incorporated into the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. This treaty transferred the region from Sikh control to the Dogra rulers with the financial exchange and laid the groundwork for future disputes, since it established a separate political entity in a region with diverse

ethnic, religious, and cultural groups (Lamb, 2008). Kashmir's political status further became contentious after the partition of British India in 1947. That year, the princely state, ruled by a Hindu Maharaja, Hari Singh, was given the choice to accede either to India or Pakistan. I assume this decision to be a crucial moment in the history of the conflict because the Maharaja chose to accede to India after facing a Pakistani tribal invasion. As a consequence, the first India-Pakistan war (1947-1948) started and the Line of Control which divided Kashmir between the two countries was established (Lamb, 2008).

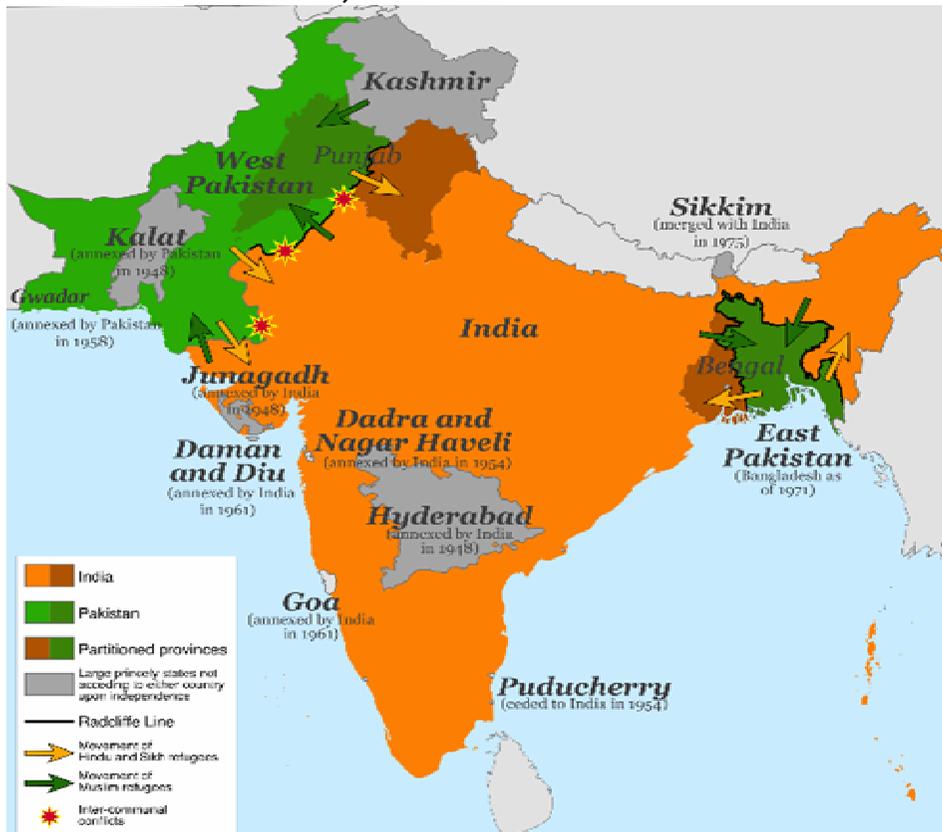
If talking about the one of the preconditions of the conflict – culture forced by religion – Kashmir's cultural history is marked by a blend of Hinduism and Islam which created a complex and often tense interaction between different religious communities (Lamb, 2008). I believe that the division between Kashmiri Muslims and Hindus became way more traceable during the 20th century, as communal tensions escalated in the wake of the partition.

Following from the cultural preconditions, I believe that it is also essential to emphasize the national ones. National identity in Kashmir has always been contested, and the national question—whether Kashmir should be part of India, Pakistan, or an independent entity—has remained central to the conflict. Here, the role of the Kashmiri leadership, particularly Sheikh Abdullah and his National Conference, is also momentous, since Sheikh Abdullah being initially a proponent of autonomy within India eventually moved towards advocating for a plebiscite to allow Kashmiris to determine their own future (Lamb, 2008). I conjecture that this shift in leadership and its subsequent fallout with India played a critical role in fueling the ongoing dispute.

From the preconditions of the conflict, I want to return to the historical period after the first Indo-Pakistani war. After this war and the establishment of the Line of Control, the political situation in Kashmir remained unstable. In the early years after the partition (see Picture 2), India's integration of Jammu and Kashmir remained very minor, and the region's special status under Article 370 of the Indian Constitution, which granted it autonomy, was central to this process.

However, by the 1950s, the political landscape began shifting, particularly after the death of Sheikh Abdullah in 1967. His leadership, which had initially advocated for greater autonomy within India, was replaced by leaders less inclined to compromise with India which set the stage for greater regional disorder (Rizvi, 1992).

Pic. 2: Partition of India, 1948-1975



Source: Wikipedia, Wikimedia Commons, *Map of the Partition of India in 1947*, retrieved February 11, 2025, from: https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/thumb/3/3b/Partition_of_India_1947_en.svg/300px-Partition_of_India_1947_en.svg.png

The 1980s were a turning point in the Kashmir conflict, as growing disillusionment among Kashmiri Muslims led to insurgency, especially after the 1987 rigged elections. Protests escalated into demands for independence or union with Pakistan. In response, India deployed military forces, which led to violent clashes with militants. Pakistan's support for

insurgents became evident through cross-border infiltration and material aid, which intensified the conflict into the early 1990s (Rizvi, 1992). By the 1990s, the conflict took on an international dimension, with Pakistan pushing the self-determination narrative. The 1999 Kargil conflict, marked by Pakistani military infiltration, led to intense Indo-Pakistani clashes. Moreover, the 2008 Mumbai attacks further derailed peace talks (Rizvi, 1992).

In the meantime, China's increasing presence in the region introduced yet another dimension of complexity to the Kashmir conflict. The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (see Picture 3), a component of China's Belt and Road Initiative, passes through Gilgit-Baltistan, India's contested territory (Tahir & Huda, 2022). Infrastructure development has served both to solidify Pakistan's hold on the territory and to advance China's strategic interests in the dispute. Nonetheless, Pakistan's increasing reliance on China for military and economic backing has made its position on Kashmir more rigid and made a diplomatic solution less likely.

Pic. 3: China-Pakistan Economic Corridor



Source: Drishti IAS

If talking about the situation for now, one of the most significant developments in recent years was the aforementioned revocation of Article 370 in August 2019, which removed Kashmir's special status within India. This move by the Indian government was condemned all over India as well as worldwide since it was perceived as a unilateral move aimed at altering Kashmir's demographic and political landscape. This revocation led to an increased security

presence in the region and a clampdown on political and communication freedoms (Rizvi, 1992).

In this context, I assume that the prospects for intervention and resolution of the conflict are way more uncertain, especially through the exclusion of the primary stakeholders - the people of Kashmir. Border tensions in Ladakh, coupled with deepening China-Pakistan military ties and growing Chinese economic influence in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir, bring a global significance to the conflict, making it more than just an Indo-Pakistani issue (The Carter Center, 2003). Also, while international mediation is contested, with India opposing and Pakistan seeking it (The Carter Center, 2003), I believe that the conflict remains deeply rooted in historical and cultural factors, shaped by evolving geopolitical dynamics since the mid-19th century. Considering all these points, it is my deep conviction that without a comprehensive and sustained commitment to addressing both the political and economic dimensions of the conflict, the Kashmir dispute will likely persist as a flashpoint in South Asian and global geopolitics.

In her book “Statecraft: Strategies for a Changing World”, Mrs. M. Thatcher wrote: “History becomes even more important as a basis for our judgments.” Hence, I believe that the sides of the conflict and international observers learned some lessons from it that can be used as a basis for reflection to unleash other conflicts.

THE LESSONS THAT THE WORLD COMMUNITY LEARNED IN THE FACT OF REGULATING THE CONFLICT AND THEIR POTENTIAL TO BE APPLIED TO RUSSIAN- UKRAINIAN WAR

At Charles University in my bachelor program, I particularly study philosophy, and I believe that from each situation you can understand the eternal number of lessons. However, in order to make this essay not only about them, I want to highlight the most significant, namely lessons connected to the limits of the military solution of the conflict, the importance of bilateral dialogue, the role of local political

aspirations, the complexity of international mediation, and the need for multidimensional measures.

I want to start with one of the most significant lessons from the Kashmir conflict - military force alone cannot resolve deep-rooted political disputes. Both India and Pakistan have engaged in multiple wars over Kashmir (1947-1948, 1965, and 1999), yet none resulted in a permanent resolution. Instead, military actions have often exacerbated tensions and led to increased insurgency and political instability (Bose, 2003). It is my deep conviction that the failure of outright military victories underscores the necessity of diplomatic and political solutions.

Secondly, it is important to highlight the meaningful progress toward peace that has occurred primarily through bilateral negotiations rather than third-party interventions. The 1972 Simla Agreement, for instance, marked a shift from international mediation to direct India-Pakistan negotiations, which reaffirmed the principle that disputes should be resolved bilaterally (Bose, 2003). However, such dialogues have often been fragile due to political instability, mistrust, or acts of violence.

Thirdly, I think that a crucial, but often neglected aspect of conflict resolution is the inclusion of Kashmiri voices. Namely, the peace efforts that ignore Kashmiri political aspirations tend to fail because they do not address the root causes of discontent (Bose, 2003). As far as I can see, the Indian government's unilateral measures, such as the 2019 revocation of Article 370, illustrate how imposed solutions can intensify resistance rather than bring stability. The lesson is clear: sustainable peace requires acknowledging and accommodating the diverse political aspirations of the Kashmiri people.

Fourthly, the international community has played a limited but inconsistent role in the Kashmir dispute. While the United Nations brokered a ceasefire in 1949, subsequent attempts at mediation, including those by the United States and the Soviet Union, have had mixed results. International involvement is often constrained by the geopolitical interests of major powers, particularly regarding their relations with India and Pakistan (Bose, 2003). I conjecture that this means that

the external mediation alone cannot impose a solution without the commitment of the primary stakeholders.

Fifthly, I want to highlight the fact that no single-track approach—whether military, diplomatic, or economic—can resolve the issue. Indian political scientist S. Bose thinks that a multidimensional approach that combines political dialogue, economic cooperation, and security guarantees is the right one. Additionally, confidence-building measures, such as cross-border trade and people-to-people contacts, have shown promise in reducing hostility, though their impact has been limited by recurring political crises (Bose, 2003).

I believe that the Kashmir experience can be applied to the Russian-Ukrainian war as well, though the conditions are different. As aforementioned, the experience of resolving the Kashmir crisis shows that military force alone cannot resolve fundamental political contradictions. Despite decades of armed confrontation, neither India nor Pakistan have been able to impose a final solution to the conflict. In the Russian-Ukrainian war, this is evident in the fact that prolonged hostilities have not achieved any of the stated goals of the parties. The depletion of resources, the destruction of infrastructure, and humanitarian disasters only exacerbate the conflict and don't contribute to the establishment of a lasting peace. I would also like to highlight the fact that significant progress in resolving the Kashmir issue has occurred primarily through bilateral negotiations and not through third-party intervention. I believe that in the case of Ukraine, this means that while international mediation can play a supporting role, sustainable peace can only be achieved if Moscow and Kyiv are willing to negotiate directly.

In addition, I believe that the Kashmir experience also shows that external mediation alone cannot impose a solution without a real commitment from the main stakeholder. The mediation efforts of the UN, the US and other players did not lead to a final settlement of the dispute between India and Pakistan by virtue of the fact that both sides continued to pursue their national interests. I assume that in the Russian-Ukrainian war perspective, it can be interpreted the following way: even strong diplomatic pressure from the West or other

international actors will not produce results unless Moscow and Kyiv are prepared to make concessions and negotiate.

However, I think that the lessons from Kashmir conflict can be applied not only for other international conflicts, but mainly to Kashmir itself. Therefore, in the next chapter of the essay I want to indicate the possible prospects of this Eastern conflict, considering its history and highlighted lessons.

PROSPECTS OF THIS CONFLICT

In this chapter, I will analyze how different scholars assess the potential trajectories of the conflict and will give my own view on this issue. From the one point of view, the persistent danger of military escalation, particularly given the presence of nuclear weapons and the lack of effective de-escalation mechanisms, is essential. From the other one, the conflict cannot be viewed solely through the lens of state rivalries. Also, I will examine the strategic role of China and the significance of the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) in shaping the conflict. In exploring these perspectives, I want to understand the key forces that shape Kashmir's future.

Ganguly (1992) points out the ever-present danger of the Kashmir war getting out of hand as a full-scale war, thanks to the participation of nuclear-armed India and Pakistan. Since both countries have now built large nuclear stockpiles, it is apparent that the danger of the conflict getting out of hand continues to be a matter of enormous concern. Moreover, the protracted military confrontations in the Kashmir area, coupled with increased political tensions, have the potential to generate massive misperceptions, particularly without robust communication and de-escalation mechanisms between the two states (Ganguly, 1992).

In this context, I believe that the role of the international community becomes crucial in preventing further escalation. Most likely, the global community, including major powers such as the United States, Russia, and China, has a vested interest in the stability of South Asia in light of its strategic importance and the nuclear dimension of the conflict. According to Ganguly (1992), the international community

must play an active role in preventing escalation, particularly by facilitating dialogue and fostering confidence-building measures between India and Pakistan. I also want to note that this would require not only diplomatic pressure but also strategic engagement with China, as its support for Pakistan complicates any potential resolution.

If proceeding talking about the international mediators, I think it is crucial to indicate one more aspect. Although the U.N. Security Council was historically involved in Kashmir, it has been limited in its capacity to intervene due to the veto powers of permanent members, including Russia and China. Thus, diplomatic initiatives must focus on encouraging bilateral talks, potentially with the support of regional powers like the United States and Russia, who can provide neutral ground for negotiations (Duschinski et al., 2023). Surely, the involvement of China in particular is crucial, because China has significant interests in the region and I believe that without its participation in any potential peace process, the prospects for lasting peace remain uncertain.

From this perspective, I envision China's involvement to be both stabilizing and complicating. On one hand, Beijing has an interest in not allowing things to escalate between India and Pakistan since war could jeopardize the future of large infrastructure projects like the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (Fingar, 2016). Conversely, the increasing economic and military relationship between China and Pakistan may embolden Islamabad's stance on Kashmir, thereby heightening tensions with India. The growth of Chinese influence in Pakistan-held Kashmir, especially with the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), has already created diplomatic tensions with India, which, as noted above, perceives such developments as an encroachment on its territorial integrity (Fingar, 2016).

I want to expand on this analysis by exploring the broader geopolitical ramifications of CPEC. The economic corridor is not just a trade route, but a strategic tool that redefines power dynamics in South Asia. As Hussain & Jamali (2019) see, CPEC serves as a counterbalance to India's growing economic and military influence, reinforcing the China-Pakistan alliance as a challenge to New Delhi's regional

dominance. In this view, the corridor boosts Pakistan's strategic presence through the establishment of crucial economic lifelines and infrastructure development, making Islamabad less reliant on Western capital aid (Hussain & Jamali, 2019).

In this point, I also want to highlight the broader geopolitical context of South Asia, and refer to it as a complex theater where the different interests of China, India, and the United States intersect. India perceives China's growing presence in the region as an attempt to encircle it strategically, reinforcing New Delhi's determination to assert its claims over Kashmir. Moreover, Fingar argues that China's investments in South Asia serve not only economic but also strategic purposes, allowing Beijing to extend its influence while securing energy and trade routes (Fingar, 2016). In my view, this strategy means China will probably continue to support Pakistan diplomatically but not involve itself militarily directly. However, Duschinski et al. (2023) argue that explaining the Kashmir conflict requires moving beyond state-centric frames for making sense of Kashmiri experiences of occupation, violence, and political desires. They frame the conflict as an issue of decolonization. If this point of view is adopted seriously, recognition of Kashmiri self-determination is needed for conflict resolution over international treaties. There has to be Kashmiri voices involved in decision-making for peaceful coexistence. With the globalization of human rights, Kashmiris can question India's account all over the world (Duschinski et al., 2023).

To sum up, there are a variety of possibilities that define the future of the Jammu and Kashmir conflict. First, the current state can persist, with ongoing skirmishes and diplomatic standstills. Second, initiatives like CPEC may enhance regional cooperation, but this will occur only if trust issues and sovereignty concerns are addressed. Third, great powers like China and the U.S. may heighten tensions by engaging in strategic competition. Fourth, due to China's economic interests, it may promote diplomacy to preclude war, consistent with Fingar's observation that China emphasizes stability (Fingar, 2016). Fifth, more Chinese infrastructure projects might heighten tensions with India. Lastly, if India

perceives China's presence as threatening, it could proceed and militarize the region itself. I believe that all these scenarios could occur individually or at the same time.

According to the GFP 2025 Military Strength Ranking (see Picture 4), India and China are the top five strongest militaries in the world, and Pakistan ranks among the top 15, which certainly makes them one of the strongest players in the world. In my understanding, since the security system of Potsdam-Yalta fell apart after the Cold War, the world is seeking a new order. And Trump's response to Russia and China is symptomatic of this. Despite diplomatic attempts, he maintained sanctions and troops in Eastern Europe. With China, his actions were more direct—trade wars, tariffs, and efforts at containing its expansion worldwide (The Guardian, 2025). It is my firm conviction that these actions signal a change in which not only the US and Russia, but new nations such as China, reshape global norms.

Pic. 4: 2025 Military Strength Ranking



Source: Global Firepower (GFP). Retrieved February 11, 2025, from <https://www.globalfirepower.com/countries-listing.php>

Hence, the world is looking for a new order, trying to take into account not just the interests of the old players but also new players like China, India and other emerging nations. From this perspective, I believe that it is worthwhile to investigate how the Jammu and Kashmir conflict current situation and future prospects can influence the new World Order, considering China and India as key actors on the international scene.

IMPACT ON THE POST-POTSDAM-YALTA WORLD ORDER

I believe that in order to understand how the Jammu and Kashmir conflict realities and prospects can influence the new Post-Potsdam-Yalta World Order, it is initially necessary to understand the portrait of the Potsdam-Yalta World Order before it ceased to exist.

The Potsdam-Yalta world order was established after World War II, based on agreements made by the Allied powers—primarily the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom—at Yalta (February 1945) and Potsdam (July–August 1945). It was intended to prevent another global conflict, contain German militarism, and manage spheres of influence. Also, it is important to note that the Cold War maintained the Potsdam-Yalta structure through bipolar rivalry, and both superpowers avoided direct confrontation but engaged in proxy conflicts, ideological competition, and arms races. However, by the end of the 20th century, internal contradictions began to undermine the order. Namely, the Soviet Union proved unable to maintain its economic and military commitments, collapsed, and ended the Cold War. American historian and political scientist J. L. Gaddis notes that what ended the Cold War was not the victory of one ideology over the other, but the exhaustion of one side's ability to compete (Gaddis, 2005). And, as I reflect on the current state of international relations, it is clear that this order has disintegrated, giving way to a new, undefined geopolitical structure.

Despite this, the post-Cold War era still retained some aspects of the previous order – NATO continued to exist, Russia took over the Soviet nuclear arsenal, and international institutions operated under Western influence. However, the period of US dominance proved to be short-lived. We have seen China emerge as a strong global economic force and Russia adopt a more aggressive foreign policy, highlighted by its invasion of Ukraine. American journalist David E. Sanger suggests that these changes indicate a shift back to a multipolar world, where the United States must manage complex relationships with various rival powers (Sanger, 2024). This transition, in my view, poses a challenge to the remnants of the Yalta-Potsdam framework, as the rising powers aim to reshape their areas of influence.

However, the United States faces a great challenge in responding to these shifts. The strategies that defined the original Cold War may no longer be effective in this more complex and interconnected global landscape. David E. Sanger highlights the importance of strengthening alliances, particularly through NATO, to present a unified front against adversarial actions. He also points out that the U.S. should reassess its foreign policy priorities, learning from past engagements such as the withdrawal from Afghanistan, to better address the challenges posed by China's economic expansion and Russia's military assertiveness (Sanger, 2024). If talking about the American zones of influence in the New World Order, I think that in North America, the U.S. shares close ties with Canada through military cooperation in NORAD and strong economic interdependence. Also, Greenland holds strategic importance due to the U.S. base at Thule (The Atlantic, 2025) and to the Northern Sea Route. Furthermore, Latin America has traditionally been a U.S. sphere of influence, with the Monroe Doctrine deterring external powers. Particularly in light of recent events, the Panama Canal remains a critical chokepoint, with the U.S. ensuring its security, despite Panama's sovereignty (CFR, 2025). The U.S. also counters China in the Indo-Pacific through the Quad (CFR, 2025), maintains Middle Eastern stability via military bases, and limits Chinese and Russian influence in Africa through AFRICOM (CFR, 2025). The Arctic's strategic

importance grows as the U.S., Canada, and NATO counter Russian and Chinese expansion (The Atlantic, 2025).

However, I believe that in order to balance this influence, we and the US in particular need to consider the possible place and prospects of other global and regional leaders and influential countries, namely India, China and Pakistan.

If talking about China, I think that its revival as a global power is marked by its Belt and Road Initiative, which seeks to create an extensive network of trade routes and infrastructure projects across Asia, Africa, and Europe. A cornerstone of this initiative is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, which not only provides China with access to the Arabian Sea through the Gwadar Port but also strengthens its strategic foothold in South Asia (CFR, 2025). In East Asia and the Pacific, China's economic and military dominance, territorial claims in the South China Sea, and strategic rivalry with the U.S. shape regional security. In Central Asia, it challenges Russia's historical influence through economic leverage (Chatham House, 2021). Also, China's African investments and Gulf energy ties strengthen its global standing, while the "Polar Silk Road" expands its Arctic reach.

Unlike China's state-driven approach, India leverages its democratic system, technological progress, and strategic partnerships to enhance its global presence. The Atmanirbhar Bharat initiative cultivates self-reliance, balancing ties between the West and BRICS to secure technological and defense investments (KPMG, 2024). In the Indo-Pacific, India counters China via the Quad, promoting a free regional order through collaboration with the U.S., Japan, and Australia (Carnegie Endowment, 2020). In South Asia, it maintains traditional influence, particularly through SAARC, countering China's regional expansion (Carnegie Endowment, 2023).

Proceeding with the Pakistan situation, I think that its geopolitical position is largely shaped by its close ties with China, particularly through the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. This partnership not only improves Pakistan's infrastructure but also strengthens its economic ties with China, even as concerns about rising debt and economic dependency persist (Lou, 2022). On the military front, Pakistan's nuclear capabilities and defense collaboration with

China, including joint military exercises and arms sales, play a key function in sustaining a balance of power in South Asia (Lou, 2022). Additionally, we see that Pakistan's relationship with the United States is complicated, especially as Washington increasingly converges with India; nevertheless, Pakistan continues to utilize its strategic position to foster bilateral relations. I believe that in the evolving global landscape, Pakistan's influence could grow through its partnerships with China and Russia, as well as its connections with important Middle Eastern nations like Saudi Arabia and Iran. I also assume that Pakistan's role as a significant player in South Asia is vital, especially concerning the Kashmir conflict and its rivalry with India. Moreover, Pakistan's backing of proxy groups in Kashmir and Afghanistan illustrates its strategy to exert regional influence without direct military involvement (Lou, 2022). For Pakistan, the Kashmir issue is intricately linked to its national identity and foreign policy. Namely, it perceives the conflict as a matter of self-determination, utilizing diplomatic avenues such as the Organization of Islamic Cooperation to seek international support. In this context, Pakistan's military strategy encompasses direct engagement, proxy warfare, and leveraging China's increasing influence to counter India's dominance (Lou, 2022). Also, as far as I can see, by seeking to capitalize on its alliance with China to gain economic and military leverage, Pakistan is positioning itself as a key player in the South Asian and Central Asian power dynamics, with hopes of increasing its role in regional governance as the New World Order takes shape.

Returning to Kashmir, India, on the other hand, views Kashmir as critical to its sovereignty and regional security. The revocation of Article 370 in 2019 solidified this view by fully integrating Kashmir into India, a move that faced pushback from both Pakistan and China, as discussed in earlier chapters. India's growing military presence in Kashmir, along with its strategic partnerships with the U.S., especially through the Quad, strengthens its stance against both Pakistan and China (Ganguly et al., 2023). I believe India's aim is not just to maintain control over Kashmir but also to establish itself as a leading regional power that can influence the broader Indo-Pacific strategy. I conjecture that by asserting its authority over

Kashmir, India appears to be trying to counterbalance China's increasing regional influence and enhance its strategic independence on the global stage.

Regarding China, its support for Pakistan helps it solidify its regional presence while countering India's ascent. The Belt and Road Initiative and the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor are key tools for China to extend its economic and strategic reach in South Asia. For China, having a stake in the Kashmir conflict enables it to challenge India's influence, especially as India converges more closely with the U.S. and the Quad (Lou, 2022). Furthermore, I think that China's investments in the region could be leveraged to strengthen its position in the ongoing Sino-Indian rivalry, since it may have an aim for a larger role in the economic and security dynamics of the New World Order.

Thus, I believe that the Kashmir conflict remains a high-stakes geopolitical issue where India, Pakistan, and China each seek to secure territorial, economic, and strategic advantages. I presume that the outcome of this dispute will have far-reaching consequences for the future balance of power in South Asia and beyond, since these three powers jockey for position in the evolving global order. And if considering the future balance of power beyond the South Asia, I believe that due to the fact that war in Ukraine has become a field of confrontation and influence between the world's major powers, including China and India (Ukrinform, 2024) by different instruments, which I will explain further, and both of them are involved in the Jammu and Kashmir conflict, I dare to suggest that due to the possible changes in the course of the conflict in Jammu and Kashmir, and, therefore, the impact on the distribution of the zones of influence of the countries in the frame of the New World Order, it could lead to changes in the course of the Russian-Ukrainian war.

HOW JAMMU AND KASHMIR CAN AFFECT THE COURSE OF THE RUSSIAN-UKRAINIAN WAR?

In this chapter, I want to analyze how the development of Jammu and Kashmir conflict can influence the course of the

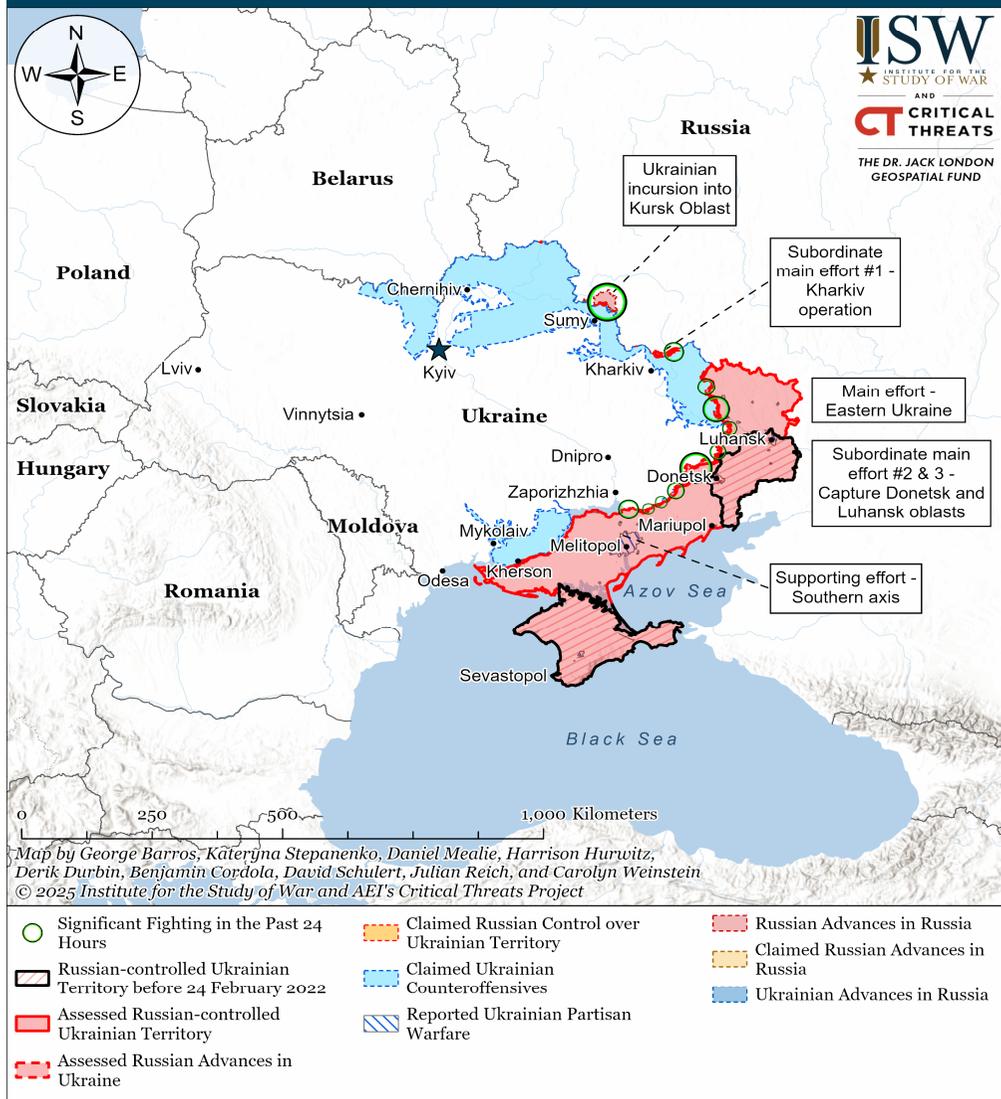
Russian-Ukrainian war. However, I will do it not merely through using the mediator in the face of the change of the zones of influence, but also directly. Nevertheless, firstly, I want to indicate how the mentioned in the previous chapter possible changes in the zones of influence in the New World Order in light of the Jammu and Kashmir conflict can influence the Russian-Ukrainian war.

I believe that the shifting of global zones of influence directly affects the war in Ukraine, as it alters the strategic interests of the major powers involved. Russia's military actions in Ukraine (see Picture 5) are part of a broader effort to block Western influence in its historical sphere. As Mankoff (2024) argues, Russia views NATO's expansion and Ukraine's integration into Western structures as existential threats. This war is not just about territorial control, but about preventing a broader geopolitical realignment that could diminish Russia's role in global politics. If Ukraine were to fully align with the West, it would weaken Russia's ability to challenge the established world order (Mankoff, 2024). Ultimately, the redistribution of influence in South Asia could profoundly affect the Russia-Ukraine war. I conjecture that as global powers shift their priorities, the balance of military, economic, and diplomatic support for Russia and Ukraine may evolve, influencing the war's outcome.

Namely, as was already mentioned, China's expanding influence through its Belt and Road Initiative and economic partnerships is redefining its global role. While Beijing has maintained a neutral stance on the Russia-Ukraine war, its growing dominance in Africa, Central Asia, and Latin America affects global alignments. China's deepening economic ties with Russia, particularly in energy and trade, provide Moscow with an economic lifeline amid Western sanctions (Ganguly et al., 2023). However, I assume that as China strengthens its influence in key regions, it may become more cautious about being closely associated with Russia's war. And if Beijing prioritizes stabilizing its global economic relationships, it could limit its indirect support for Moscow to avoid Western economic retaliation (Carnegie Endowment, 2024).

Pic. 5: Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War

Assessed Control of Terrain in the Russo-Ukrainian War March 27, 2025 at 1:30 PM EST



Source: Institute for the Study of War (ISW), <https://www.understandingwar.org/sites/default/files/Russo-Ukrainian%20War%20March%2027%2C%202025.png> (March 27, 2025).

India's evolving role in the world order also has major parts for the war. Historically, India has balanced relations between Russia and the West by purchasing Russian oil and defense

equipment while strengthening ties with the U.S. and Europe. However, as India seeks to expand its influence in the Indo-Pacific and counter China, its alignment with the West is likely to deepen (Carnegie Endowment, 2024). I assume that if India shifts further toward the U.S. and its allies, its reliance on Russian arms may decline, which will weaken a key economic and strategic relationship for Moscow. Additionally, India's growing importance in global supply chains means that Western powers may prioritize strengthening ties with New Delhi, further isolating Russia.

Pakistan, traditionally aligned with China, is also adjusting its foreign policy. As its economic dependence on Beijing grows, Pakistan may become more integrated into China's strategic vision, which can limit its engagement with Russia (Lou, 2022). I believe that while Pakistan has not been a major player in the Russia-Ukraine war, its shifting alliances contribute to the broader geopolitical realignment that affects Moscow's standing in the international system.

Ultimately, as China, India, and Pakistan redefine their zones of influence, Russia's position weakens. It is my deep conviction that with India gradually leaning toward the West, China prioritizing economic stability over strategic risk, and Pakistan remaining under Beijing's influence, Moscow faces increasing diplomatic and economic constraints. I presume that these shifts may not determine the immediate outcome of the war but will shape Russia's long-term capacity to sustain its geopolitical ambitions. However, here, I want to also investigate how China, India and Pakistan can straightly affect the course of the Russia-Ukrainian war.

As far as I can observe, China has consistently positioned itself as a supportive partner of Russia in the Russia-Ukrainian war, emphasizing its strategic alliance and mutual interests. As noted by OSW Commentary (2025), China seeks to pursue its overriding objectives that include curtailing the influence of the West and promoting relations with Russia. The two powers have common objectives, which include defiance of Western international institutions, NATO, and the European Union. I think this war gives an opportunity for China to deepen its ties with Russia while avoiding direct

involvement in the war, balancing its global position and economic interests, particularly concerning Taiwan.

Discussing India, its approach towards the Russia-Ukraine conflict is driven by considering its historical relationships with Russia and the emerging strategic relations with the West. It is clear that India's relationships with Russia have greatly impacted its decision to not denounce the invasion fully (Srinivasan, 2022). While it refrains from condemning the invasion, it strengthens defense ties with Russia while maintaining global credibility (Srinivasan, 2022). India also seeks to prevent Russia from becoming overly dependent on China, protecting its regional interests.

While Indian and Pakistani stances can be characterized as neutral to the war in Ukraine, they have party different characterization. Ali and Verma (2024) point out that Pakistan's neutrality is motivated by its geopolitical balancing act, which involves having strategic relations with the United States, while also developing relations with Russia, particularly with regards to regional security issues. Secondly, Pakistan's neutrality is a reflection of its desire not to be aligned in a war that would destabilize its relations with either of the two great powers (Ali & Verma, 2024). I presume that a protracted war in Ukraine can shift world military and economic resources away from South Asia, affecting the security environment of Pakistan. Additionally, I believe that Islamabad also understands that the development of a deeper relationship with Russia could jeopardize its essential relationship with Western financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund, where Pakistan needs stabilization of the economy. Making a comparison between China, India, and Pakistan's stance on the Russian-Ukrainian conflict, I believe that it is apparent that each nation has its own specific set of strategic interests.

China aids Russia to keep the West from dominating without getting explicitly involved (OSW Commentary, 2025). India is neutral, engaging with Russia and the West on equal terms for security and economic reasons (Srinivasan, 2022). Pakistan is also neutral with a focus on regional stability (Ali & Verma, 2024). Although they refrain from intervention, they are able to exert indirect influence according to their relative stakes in the conflict. Nevertheless, I believe it is obvious that these

nations might not be involved directly in the war, but they can use other indirect tools of influence, depending on their own interests in the Russian-Ukrainian war.

While I have listed most of the key levers with which China, India and Pakistan can affect each other, I have not listed one that can shape the direction of the Russia-Ukrainian war – that is the war in Kashmir. Specifically, in the rest of these paragraphs, I will discuss primarily the employment of leveraging the escalation of the war in Kashmir for the aforementioned purpose.

I think that India's role in the Kashmir dispute gives it the flexibility to play strategically on the international scene particularly with China and the West. Especially, the sympathy of the majority of Western nations towards India's dispute with Pakistan over Kashmir was cultivated significantly by India's use of historical discourse concerning Kashmir. It is a reality that India can use this sympathy to put pressure on China, especially following Chinese relations with Pakistan. I believe that if India can use Beijing's alignment with Pakistan over the Kashmir question as part of a Chinese permissive to disorder approach, then China can be put in the position of having to defend the status quo. Such a diplomatic action could, by its mere occurrence, transform the dynamics of regional relations on the presupposition that it will curb Chinese belligerence on a variety of issues, including those concerning its interactions with Europe and America. As I see it, this would enable India to, on one hand, consolidate her global position and on the other, strengthen her relationship with western nations, which would have an impact on India's position regarding the Russia-Ukraine war. Apart from that, by being in alignment with Western powers, India might be pushed to adopt a more critical perspective of Russia's actions in Ukraine. Then, regarding China, in my opinion, China employs its relationship with Pakistan to advance its geopolitical interests in Kashmir against the regional power of India, potentially constraining India's regional power. In addition, strengthening Pakistan both militarily and diplomatically, China could divert India's focus away from global issues, like the Russia-Ukraine conflict.

I believe that by shoring up Pakistan's Kashmir ambitions, China is weakening India's strategic stance, and it

can compel India to rethink its relationship with the West. Overall, the tilt could restrict India's interaction with America and Europe to the indirect advantage of Russia. At the same time, China's partnership with Russia can also additionally stabilize Moscow in the current war. It is my strong opinion that for Pakistan, its China relationship and its persistent claims on Kashmir offer a unique opportunity to influence not only South Asian geopolitics but also global diplomatic alignments. I believe that Pakistan's China relationship makes it stronger vis-a-vis India, forcing India to split attention between regional security and Western relationships, limiting its response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine.

Pakistan's alignment with China in Kashmir can push the West to India's corner, risking India-Russia ties but also possibly pushing India into Moscow's arms. In addition, proxy wars in Kashmir can further distract India, limiting its global role. Therefore, by involving India, I believe Pakistan can shape the lines of global diplomacy, determining the balance of the Russia-Ukraine war in a manner that could be beneficial to Pakistan and China. Generally, the emergence of the conflict of Jammu and Kashmir may impact the fate of the Russian-Ukrainian war indirectly—through the changing spheres of influence of the emerging world order—and directly—by affecting the strategic choices of China, India, and Pakistan. With emerging global realignments reordering the international order, Russia is under pressure because increasing restrictions are being imposed upon its diplomatic and economic reach.

Besides, China's increasing economic relations with Russia give Moscow an economic cushion, but Beijing's own geopolitical agendas can keep it from extending total support. Then, India, while traditionally a friend of Russia, is tilting increasingly to the West, potentially leaving Moscow more isolated. Furthermore, Pakistan, in a delicate balance in its relations with China and the West, is staying neutral for now but could play regional equations that have impacts on global alliances.

However, for me as for Ukrainian, this information costs less if we don't consider what should Ukraine do about it. As far as I can see, for Ukraine, understanding these dynamics offers an opportunity to strategically engage with China, India,

and Pakistan in ways that could limit Russian influence. Given China's cautious support for Russia, I think that Ukraine should continue engaging with Beijing diplomatically, considering the risks of economic entanglement with a declining Moscow while offering China economic incentives for maintaining neutrality or even distancing itself from Russia. We could also leverage its Western partners to pressure China into prioritizing economic stability over strategic alignment with Moscow. Regarding India, I conjecture that Ukraine should capitalize on New Delhi's growing ties with the West. Namely, by fostering deeper relations with India, particularly in economic and technological sectors, Ukraine can encourage India to gradually reduce its dependence on Russian defense imports. As for Pakistan, I assume that Ukraine should acknowledge its strategic constraints but seek engagement through diplomatic channels, emphasizing economic opportunities and stability in South Asia. Given Pakistan's reliance on Western financial institutions, we could advocate for policies that encourage Islamabad to maintain its neutrality or even cautiously support Ukraine in diplomatic forums or even by selling weapons, like ammunition supply in 2023 (Deutsche Welle, 2023).

Finally, considering the potential leverage of the Jammu and Kashmir conflict in the global power structure, it is my deep conviction that Ukraine could tactically highlight India's concerns over China's support for Pakistan to create a wedge between Moscow and New Delhi. If India perceives that Russia's alignment with China indirectly benefits Pakistan, it may further distance itself from Moscow, weakening one of Russia's critical geopolitical ties. Simultaneously, I believe that Ukraine should work with its Western allies and partners to deter China from using the Kashmir conflict as a means of pressuring India, thereby preventing further destabilization that could indirectly strengthen Russia.

CONCLUSIONS

The Kashmir conflict continues to be one of the most prominent geopolitical issues in South Asia, affecting not only

regional stability but also larger global power structures. As a key historical conflict between India and Pakistan, the dispute has endured because of deeply rooted political rivalries, religious fault lines, and strategic interests. The emerging global powers—especially China's and India's emergence—have further transformed the character of this conflict so that it emerges as an influential force in shaping the post-Potsdam-Yalta world system.

Secondly, as highlighted in the essay, China and Pakistan's deepening economic and military ties, and particularly via the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor, undermine India's regional hegemony and empower Beijing further. At the same time, India's strategic alliances with the West, specifically via the Quad grouping, suggest its larger ambitions that go beyond South Asia. Hence, this clash of interests implies that Kashmir is a complicated bilateral affair to a serious forum in international power realignment.

In this essay, I also emphasized the direct and indirect influence of this conflict on the war between Russia and Ukraine. The changed dynamics of China, India, and Pakistan—dependent on their geopolitical strategies in Kashmir—have wider implications for Russia's strategic placement. I believe that as India reorients its alliances and China reexamines its global economic strategies, Russia's dependence on its allies comes under scrutiny.

Ultimately, I believe that the resolution of the Kashmir conflict is unlikely in the near future due to the vested interests of all major players. Notwithstanding, it is my deep conviction that its developments will continue to shape international relations, influencing security frameworks, economic alignments, and diplomatic strategies. For Ukraine, understanding these dynamics presents an opportunity to engage diplomatically with key regional powers, ensuring that Russia's influence is further weakened in the evolving global order.

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