



ON THE IMPACT OF THE INDIAN-PAKISTANI CONFRONTATION ON SITUATION IN SOUTH ASIA

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Abstract

This article analyses the India-Pakistan conflict as one of the most enduring and complex aspects of South Asia, shaped by the rise of British India in 1947 and the enshrined dispute over the status of Jammu and Kashmir. The article examines the historical, political and strategic background of the conflict, its impact on regional security and the formation of sustainable strategic instability, including in the context of nuclear deterrence. It concludes that the India-Pakistan conflict remains a key obstacle to regional cooperation and integration in South Asia.

Keywords: India-Pakistan conflict, South Asia, regional security, Jammu and Kashmir, nuclear deterrence, strategic instability, unstable deterrence, terrorism, SAARC, international actors, crisis, arms control.

Introduction

The India-Pakistan standoff, which erupted with the dissolution of British India in 1947, remains one of the key regional security issues in South Asia. The conflict stems from the dispute over the ownership of Jammu and Kashmir, which has repeatedly led to armed clashes and military operations between the two states. This standoff defines the strategic orientation of the entire South Asian political and security system and has a multifaceted impact on the region's



Modern American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities

ISSN (E): 3067-8153

Volume 01, Issue 08, November, 2025

Website: usajournals.org

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development. The India-Pakistan conflict is one of the longest and most complex international disputes of the 20th and 21st centuries. Its roots lie in South Asia's colonial past, religious and political tensions, and, in particular, the decolonization process of British India. For nearly two centuries, the Indian subcontinent was under the control of the British Empire. The British administration governed a vast and multinational territory where various religions, languages, and cultures coexisted. Under colonial rule, differences between religious communities, primarily Hindus and Muslims, gradually became politicized. The British policy of "divide and rule" often exacerbated these differences, encouraging the formation of separate political identities. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the national liberation movement in India gained momentum. The Indian National Congress advocated for a united, independent India, while the Muslim League increasingly expressed concerns that Muslims would find themselves in a political minority in a future independent state. These concerns led to the idea of creating a separate Muslim state. The key moment that laid the foundation for the conflict was the partition of British India in 1947 into two independent states – India and Pakistan. The borders were drawn hastily and without consideration of many social, economic, and cultural factors. This led to mass migrations and a sharp increase in tensions between the new states. Not only did partition fail to resolve religious and political tensions, but it also entrenched them at the interstate level. The Kashmir issue is particularly significant in the history of the conflict. This princely state, with a predominantly Muslim population but a Hindu ruler, became a point of contention immediately after partition. Divergent interpretations of its future status led to the first armed clash between India and Pakistan and cemented Kashmir as a central element of their confrontation. Thus, the Indo-Pakistani conflict was shaped by the colonial legacy, religious and political differences, and the peculiarities of the decolonization process. Historical antecedents not only explain the origins of the tensions but also help to understand why the conflict remains relevant in the modern world.

Regional Security and Strategic Instability in the Context of the Indo-Pakistani Standoff and Its Impact on South Asia. The Indo-Pakistani standoff is a key factor shaping the regional security architecture in South Asia. Since independence in



1947, relations between India and Pakistan have been characterized by a high degree of mistrust, periodic armed conflicts, and persistent strategic instability, which impacts not only bilateral relations but also the entire region.

At the same time, it should be noted that the nuclear factor, i.e., the possession of nuclear weapons by both countries, significantly contributes to strategic instability and is one of the main features of the Indo-Pakistani confrontation. The nuclear tests conducted by India and Pakistan in 1998 finally shifted the conflict to the realm of nuclear deterrence. While the nuclear factor reduces the likelihood of a full-scale war, it also increases the risk of escalation in crises caused by terrorist attacks or border incidents.

Researchers note that a model of "unstable deterrence" has developed in the region, in which limited military action is possible even under a nuclear umbrella¹.

In April 2025, a terrorist attack occurred in Indian-administered Kashmir, killing several tourists; India accused Pakistan of supporting the group responsible for the attack, leading to a severance of diplomatic relations and the termination of several agreements, including the Indus Waters Treaty². In response to these events, India launched Operation Sindoor on May 6–7, 2025, launching missile strikes against suspected terrorist targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-administered Kashmir. Pakistan, in turn, launched countermeasures, including Operation Bunyan-ul-Marsoos. The international community expressed serious concern about a possible escalation, and the UN Security Council called for de-escalation and dialogue³.

In 2025, an exchange of strikes, including with the use of missiles and aircraft, demonstrated the willingness of the parties to use high-tech means, which, in the context of a nuclear balance, increases the likelihood of errors and unintentional escalation⁴.

Interstate and domestic political factors of instability.

¹Ganguly, S. Nuclear Stability in South Asia. International Security , 2001. (<https://library.fes.de/libalt/journals/sweetsfulltext/14218813 . PDF>

²ANALYTICS – “Tensions between India and Pakistan: Will the water crisis cause new wars?” (<https://www.aa.com.tr/ru>

³Reuters, UN urges India-Pakistan talks on Kashmir tensions. <https://www.reuters.com/world/asia-pacific/un-security-council-urges-india-pakistan-talks-kashmir-islamabad-says-2025-05-06/>

⁴ANALYTICS - India-Pakistan Tensions: Will the Water Crisis Lead to New Wars? <https://www.aa.com.tr/en .>



Modern American Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities

ISSN (E): 3067-8153

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Website: usajournals.org

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Beyond the direct India-Pakistan standoff, regional security is complicated by other areas of tension. For example, Pakistan faces internal conflicts, including clashes with the Taliban, which could destabilize its western borders and impact interactions with India and Central Asia ⁵. Furthermore, Pakistan's expanding military-strategic cooperation with external partners—such as Saudi Arabia—expands the geopolitical context of the conflict ⁶. The conflict encompasses not only military but also economic aspects: the cessation or restriction of trade, the blocking of water resources and investments, and the strengthening of cybersecurity. As a result of the 2025 conflict, increased investment in defense and digital security reflects the growing needs of regional states to adapt to new threats ⁷.

The Indo-Pakistani standoff hinders the development of regional cooperation mechanisms, such as the South Asian Association of Nations (SAARC), and limits South Asian integration. The immediate consequences of the conflict—temporary border closures, the suspension of bilateral projects, and mutual sanctions—only deepen isolation and mistrust in the region. The strategic instability generated by the Indo-Pakistani standoff remains a fundamental challenge to regional security in South Asia. The risk of escalating armed clashes, including under the nuclear umbrella, the lack of trust-building mechanisms, and the influence of domestic political factors in Pakistan complicate the creation of a sustainable security system. Amid intensifying great power competition and the growing role of non-traditional threats (such as cyberattacks), prospects for long-term peace depend on the resumption of dialogue, the strengthening of diplomatic channels, and integration initiatives at the regional level.

The India-Pakistan conflict is impacting international relations and drawing in third-party powers. For example, Pakistan's alliance with China and India's strategic interests in cooperation with the United States and other states increase the complexity of the geopolitical configuration in South Asia. These external ties

⁵The Taliban-India Rapprochement and the Changing Geopolitics of South Asia <https://www.ankasam.org/anka-analizler/taliban-hindistan-yakinlasmasi-ve-guney-asyanin-degisen-jeopolitigi>

⁶Saudi Arabia awards Pakistan's powerful army chief highest national honor after defense pact <https://apnews.com/article/pakistan-army-chief-saudi-arabia-higest-award-c22b3441d1268084b95177ae080d16ca>

⁷Breaking the Waters: Modi's Regional Gambit, Unravelling of South Asian Equilibrium. May 1, 2025 <https://thinktank.pk/2025/05/01/breaking-the-waters-modis-regional-gambit-unravelling-of-south-asian-equilibrium/>



create additional tensions, as each side must build strategic alliances to balance the other's influence.

Prospects for settlement and regional cooperation

Experts have proposed various approaches to reducing tensions and strengthening stability in the region. These include the creation of regional collective security mechanisms, expanded economic ties, diplomatic initiatives, and arms control measures. Some authors note that sustainable regional cooperation is only possible through mutual concessions, building trust, and engaging all South Asian states in dialogue. The Indian-Pakistani standoff remains a key factor shaping the situation in South Asia. It impacts regional security, economic development, and international relations. Long-standing tensions between the two nuclear-armed states increase the likelihood of escalation, reduce trust, and hinder the development of effective regional cooperation. Resolving this standoff requires a comprehensive approach—from strengthening diplomatic channels to creating institutional mechanisms for collective security.

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***Modern American Journal of Social Sciences
and Humanities***

ISSN (E): 3067-8153

Volume 01, Issue 08, November, 2025

Website: usajournals.org

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