

Pakistan's Foreign Policy

KASHMIR ISSUE

Pakistan's Policy:

Pakistan has sought to obtain the accession of Kashmir for over fifty years. This policy has its origins in Pakistan's struggle for a separate state for South Asia's Muslims, its belief that India never accepted Pakistan's existence, and Pakistan's domestic cleavages and institutional weaknesses. Because these beliefs and characteristics remain today, Pakistan is unlikely to drop its claim to Kashmir. Pakistan's strategy to achieve its objectives has included diplomacy, war, and proxy war. This thesis explores how internal and external variables have impacted Pakistan's methods and what this means for the current effort to end the proxy war in Kashmir. Although Pakistan is unlikely to abandon its claims to Kashmir, an analysis of Pakistan's shift from diplomacy to war in 1965 and from diplomacy to proxy war in 1990 demonstrates that Pakistan's strategy responds to external constraints and opportunities. The United States may not be able to end the dispute over Kashmir by pressuring Pakistan to drop its claims, but Washington retains sufficient influence to persuade Pakistan to use a peaceful strategy to pursue its claims to Kashmir.

Impact on Pakistan:

Pakistan squandered billions of dollars in assistance from the international community in pursuit of a strategic advantage against India, instead of building its economic foundations. Pakistan is feeling the effects of the suspension of medicine and cotton supplies from India, while economic losses to India caused by the dispute are estimated to have exceeded \$1.4 billion to date. Pakistan has deployed about 87,500 'regular' soldiers, which include their commandos, along the LoC. 'Irregulars' also man the LoC, but their numbers are not known. 'Irregulars' are those who are not part of the Pakistan Army but operate along with the soldiers.

Pakistani Sentiment:

Protests were held across Pakistan as the government said it strongly condemned India's constitutional changes in the disputed Himalayan region of Kashmir claimed by both countries. In Muzaffarabad, the capital of Pakistan-administered Kashmir around 45 km (28 miles) from the contested border between the neighbours, dozens of protesters held black flags and burnt car tyres, chanting "Down with India". There were also protests in Islamabad, the capital, and Pakistan's commercial hub of Karachi. The Pakistani population also participated in several efforts such as fundraising for the Kashmiris.