

# Regional Conflict



## READING 1

Washington Post Foreign Service. "Russia Fails to Persuade Pakistan, India to Budge" *The Washington Post*, June 5, 2002, A17.

### -- Discussion of Reading 1 -----

1. What two countries on the Asian subcontinent have been in a state of conflict? (Pakistan and India)
2. Who were the leaders of these countries in June 2002? (India's prime minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee and Pakistan's President General Pervez Musharraf)
3. Who was trying to bring the two leaders to the negotiating table? (Russia's president Vladimir Putin)
4. What is the cause of the conflict? (Kashmir has been claimed by both India and Pakistan for more than 50 years.)
5. What was the military situation in these countries in June 2002? (The two nations had more than 1 million troops faced off across their border with Kashmir, and they were trading artillery fire.)
6. How many wars have the two countries fought since 1947? (three wars)

7. How did the two leaders react at Almaty when they were in the same room? (They walked in separately, stuck to separate corners of the room, and ignored each other.)
8. Which leader refused to forswear first use of nuclear weapons? (Musharraf)
9. Write a one-sentence statement in your own words of the main idea of the article. (At a conference in Almaty in June 2002, Russian president Putin had hoped to bring Musharraf and Vajpayee to the negotiating table to mediate the Kashmir dispute, but he was unsuccessful.)
10. Is the tone of the article objective and unbiased or subjective and biased? (The tone of the article is unbiased, and the journalist reports the facts of the situation without attempting to influence the opinion of the reader.)
11. What resolution to this conflict would you suggest?
12. Do you believe in global nuclear disarmament? Justify your answer.

## READING 2

**Praful Bidwai.** “Politics: Year Opens with India and Pakistan Talking Tough,” *Global Information Network*, January 2, 2003, 1.

### -- Discussion of Reading 2 -----

1. How did India and Pakistan start 2003? (They started it with tough talk as well as accelerated nuclear weapons and missile development programs.)
2. What message did Pakistan President Musharraf convey to Indian President Vajpayee? (He told Vajpayee that “Indian troops should not expect a conventional war from Pakistan” if they “moved a single step across the international border or the Line of Control” that divides Kashmir.)
3. What might have resulted if India had gone through with its plans for a conventional attack across the border in 2002? (In retrospect, such strikes might have triggered a nuclear Armageddon [final battle]).

4. Describe the steps India and Pakistan took with regard to their nuclear weapons. (New Delhi formalized the establishment of a Strategic Forces Command that manages its nuclear arsenal, and Pakistan upgraded its nuclear command authority.)
5. How did the political context in India and Pakistan change? (Both India and Pakistan shifted rightward politically with more militaristic elements coming to the fore.)
6. In what ways do Pakistan and India serve the needs of Washington? (Washington needs Pakistan for its drive against al-Qaeda. It needs India as a big emerging market and a long-term strategic counterforce to China.)
7. Why was January 2003 an especially dangerous time for South Asia? (India-Pakistan hostility remained unresolved, hardliners in both states had developed a stake in maintaining and increasing the hostility, and domestic politics in India were in a flux.)
8. What changes have taken place concerning the dispute over Kashmir since this article was published in January 2003? (The situation remains the same; terrorist attacks have continued.)

## *Vocabulary* . . . . .

Fill in the blanks with the correct words. Use each word only once.

<b>impasse</b>	<b>extremists</b>	<b>repression</b>	<b>mediators</b>
<b>arsenal</b>	<b>curtailed</b>	<b>concession</b>	<b>de-escalate</b>
<b>blackmail</b>	<b>rivalry</b>	<b>secede</b>	<b>infiltrate</b>

Kashmir is a beautiful land that lies between Pakistan and India in the Himalayan region of South Asia. It has been the center of a dispute between those two countries since 1947, when India was partitioned, creating Pakistan as a Muslim state. In 1957 Kashmir was incorporated into the Indian Union, but the majority of its population, which is Muslim, wanted to either become a part of Pakistan or gain independence. Today, after three wars, the situation is still unresolved, and Kashmir is divided between India and Pakistan.

The Islamic government of Pakistan believes that Kashmir should be a part of Pakistan on the premise that most Kashmiris are Muslim. India,

which has about 850 million Hindus and 126 million Muslims, considers Kashmir a part of India and has controlled much of the territory since the 1971 war.<sup>1</sup> Many of the people in Kashmir would like to secede from India and be independent of both countries because they “have endured 13 years of insurgency and terrorism.”<sup>2</sup> Any attempt to forge a compromise has failed, and the rivalry over this small area has continued unabated.

Now the situation is complicated by the fact that India and Pakistan have a/an arsenal of nuclear weapons, so each country is using the threat of a nuclear war to attempt to blackmail the other to withdraw from Kashmir.<sup>3</sup> However, India, which has the superior nuclear capacity, has agreed not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, while Pakistan has refused to make this concession.<sup>4</sup> Furthermore, the government of Pakistan has accused India of terrorist activities and of repression of the Muslims in Kashmir.<sup>5</sup> Similarly, India blames Pakistan for an attack on India’s Parliament in December 2001, which led to curtailed diplomatic ties between the two countries.<sup>6</sup> Islamic extremists from Pakistan continue to infiltrate India’s borders, and in November 2002, 14 people were killed in a terrorist siege of two Hindu temples.<sup>7</sup>

This longstanding conflict shows no signs of being resolved in the near future. According to *The Economist*, “prospects for talks between India and Pakistan remain remote. . . .”<sup>8</sup> Although many world leaders, including government officials from the United States, Russia, and China, have attempted to de-escalate the crisis and to act as mediators, no agreement has been reached between India and Pakistan, and the situation is at a/an impasse. Therefore, the Kashmiris’ dream of freedom and self-determination is not yet a reality, and the possibility of a South Asia nuclear war keeps tensions high in the region.<sup>9</sup>

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1. “The World Factbook” in Central Intelligence Agency (*www.cia.gov*).
  2. “Asia: A New Broom; Kashmir,” *The Economist*, 2 November 2002, 66.
  3. Praful Bidwai. “Politics: Year Opens with India and Pakistan Talking Tough,” *Global Information Service*, 2 January 2003, 1.
  4. “Russia Fails to Persuade Pakistan, India to Budge,” *The Washington Post*, 5 June 2002, A17.
  5. *Ibid.*, A17.
  6. Bidwai, 1.
  7. “Kashmir: Unhealed Wounds,” *The Economist*, 30 November 2002, 36.
  8. *Ibid.*, 36.
  9. Scott Baldauf and Howard LaFranchi. “Why Pakistan Might Turn to Nukes,” *The Christian Science Monitor*, 4 June 2002, 1.