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Abstract: *This research explores the complex dynamics of the Kashmir Conflict following the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A by the Indian government on August 5, 2019. The historical roots of the incessant dispute, stemming from the British partition of the Indian Sub-continent, set the stage for ongoing tensions between two regional arch-rivals, Pakistan and India over the region. The revocation of constitutional provisions granting special privileges and autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir presents various challenges for Pakistan. Internal security concerns, diplomatic isolation, humanitarian issues, and economic implications form critical challenges. The options of Pakistan include bilateral talks, diplomatic engagement, humanitarian initiatives, promoting internal reforms, and regional stability. Balancing these challenges and options requires navigating a complex geopolitical and strategic landscape, recognizing historical grievances, and fostering peace and stability in the region.*

Key Words: Article 370, Article 35 A, Historical Grievances, Diplomatic Isolation, Human Right Concerns

Introduction

The Kashmir Conflict between the two regional archrivals, India and Pakistan, intensified by the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A by the Indian government in August 2019, stands as one of the most contentious and enduring geopolitical issues in South Asia. The historical roots of this incessant dispute date back to the partition of the Indian Sub-continent by the British government in 1947, when the princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) became a focal point of territorial contention between Pakistan and India.

The Maharaja of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), Hari Singh, faced a security dilemma during the partition, eventually acceding to India, which ultimately led to the first Indo-Pakistani war in 1947-48. The first conflict between regional archrivals resulted in the establishment of the Line of Control (LoC), dividing the region into territories administered by Pakistan and India. Subsequently, the United Nations (UN) intervened, proposing a plebiscite or referendum to allow the indigenous people of J&K to determine their socio-political future. However, this plebiscite never

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materialized courtesy of differences of opinion between regional archrivals, leaving the issue unresolved to date (Khalid, [2021](#)).

The abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A in 2019 by the Indian government led by the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi significantly altered the political dynamics of the Kashmir Conflict. Article 35A conferred special privileges and rights to its permanent residents and Article 370 granted special autonomy to J&K. This move of abrogation, accompanied by the bifurcation or division of the state into two Union Territories – Ladakh & Jammu & Kashmir, proved a double-edged sword as it sparked a wave of opportunities and challenges, particularly for Pakistan.

Pakistan also faces diplomatic challenges as it strives to gain regional and international support for its stance on a plebiscite on Kashmir. The global community mostly siding with India often views the issue as a bilateral matter between Pakistan and India, ultimately limiting international intervention. Internally, addressing humanitarian issues and managing security concerns, including internal displacement and alleged frequent human rights violations, present formidable challenges for Pakistan and the residents of J&K. Despite these various challenges, Pakistan has various options, ranging from regional collaboration to diplomatic engagement and internal policy reforms to international law. Navigating these numerous complexities requires a comprehensive understanding of geopolitical considerations, historical grievances, and a commitment from both countries to foster stability in the region (Siddiqui & Iqbal, [2023](#)).

Background

The Kashmir Conflict is a contentious and

protracted territorial dispute of the world that traces its roots to the partition of British India in 1947. The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K), led by Maharaja Hari Singh, faced an existential dilemma during the partition of the sub-continent, given its predominantly 65% Muslim population. As a princely state and according to the partition plan, Kashmir had the option to accede to either Pakistan or India, and the decision of the Maharaja to accede to India ignited tensions among the residents and set the stage for a conflict that has persisted for more than seven decades now (Bhat, [2019](#)).

In the aftermath of the J&K's accession, both Pakistan and India claimed Kashmir as their own territory, leading to the first Indo-Pakistani war in 1947-48. The conflict resulted in the establishment of the Line of Control (LoC) between both countries, dividing the region into parts administered by Pakistan and India, with a smaller portion also controlled by China, Aksai Chin. The UN ultimately intervened in an incessant conflict, calling for a plebiscite or referendum to allow the local people of J&K to determine their own socio-political future. However, this plebiscite has never been held to date, and the region has remained a nuclear flashpoint for tensions between the two neighbouring countries.

Over the seven decades, the Kashmir Conflict between India and Pakistan has evolved into a multifaceted issue with ethnic, religious, and geopolitical dimensions. The predominantly 65 % Muslim population of Kashmir has expressed its desire for self-determination as their legitimate political right, leading to a complex mixture of armed insurgency and political movements. The region has also witnessed several armed conflicts between various militant groups and Indian security and Pakistani armed forces, causing a significant humanitarian crisis and exacerbating the human rights situation in

the region (Kronstadt, [2020](#)).

The regional and international community has been involved in frequent attempts to mediate between the two arch-rivals and find a peaceful resolution to this never-ending conflict. However, geopolitical considerations and differing perspectives have made it challenging to achieve a mutual consensus. The abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A by the BJP government in August 2019 further escalated bilateral tensions, altering the special autonomy and privileges that Jammu and Kashmir enjoyed within the Indian Union (Basnett & Pandian, [2019](#)).

Hence, the background of the Kashmir Conflict is deeply engrained and entrenched in the historical context of the partition, and the ongoing struggle for self-determination and control has created a sensitive and complex geopolitical issue with far-reaching implications for regional stability.

Significance of Article 370

Article 370 of the Indian Constitution held immense importance and significance in the context of the relationship between the state of Jammu and Kashmir and the Union of India. Enacted for the first time in 1949, the provision granted special privileges and autonomy to Jammu and Kashmir, allowing the state a considerable degree of legislative and socio-political independence. The significance of Article 370 can be better understood through its historical, political, and socio-economic dimensions discussed in the following section (Javed, [2023](#)).

Historical Context

The special status granted by the Indian government in Article 370 was a result of the Accession treaty signed by Maharaja Hari Singh of Jammu and Kashmir in 1947, allowing the state to accede or join the newly formed Indian Union. This autonomy was

intended to be a temporary measure for 20 years according to some official documents, providing the state with a distinct set of constitutional provisions until a final resolution on its political future could be achieved by both the countries.

Political Autonomy

Article 370 also conferred political autonomy to J&K by limiting the application and execution of Indian laws to the state. The state had its own flag and constitution, and J&K's residents enjoyed certain privileges, including exclusive rights over state government jobs and property. This political autonomy was a manifestation of the subtle balance struck during the accession process by the Indian government to accommodate the unique circumstances of J&K.

Socio-Economic Implications

The special status under Article 370 also had socio-economic implications for J&K. The provision allowed the state to have its own constitution, executive bodies and decision-making authority over matters related to land ownership, residency laws, and local governance. This autonomy also contributed to the preservation of the cultural heritage and distinct identity of the region.

Regional and Geopolitical Significance

Article 370 held significant regional and geopolitical implications, influencing the relationship between the two regional countries, India and Pakistan. The provision of Article 370 was a constant point of contention between the two arch-rivals, with Pakistan consistently questioning the validity of J&K's accession to India.

Hence, the significance of Article 370 became even more pronounced in August 2019 when the Indian government led by the

BJP, through a special Presidential order, effectively abrogated Article 370, revoking the special status of J&K. This move has since reshaped the power dynamics and political landscape of the region, stirring both several domestic and international debates on the future of the region and the implications for federal structure of India (Khan et al., [2023](#)).

Significance of Article 35A

The Article 35A of the Indian Constitution was also a special provision that held significant implications for the state of the J&K. Enacted in 1954 through a special Presidential order, Article 35A granted special privileges and rights to the permanent residents of the state. The multifaceted significance of Article 35A can be understood through its impact on residency laws, property rights, and the socio-political fabric of Jammu and Kashmir.

Residency Laws

One of the important aspects of Article 35A was its influence on residency laws in J&K. The provision empowered the state legislature and executive to define 'permanent residents' and accord them special privileges and rights. These rights included government jobs, exclusive ownership of property, and other welfare benefits. Article 35A aimed to safeguard the interests of the local population and protect the demographic composition of the region.

Property Rights

Article 35A also played a crucial role in determining property rights in J&K. It prohibited non-permanent residents of J&K from acquiring immovable property in the state, ensuring that resources and land remained primarily in the hands of those considered permanent residents. This

provision was aimed at preserving the demographic and cultural identity of the state (Gulzar & Sheikh, [2021](#)).

Socio-Political Fabric

The socio-political and economic fabric of J&K was deeply influenced by Article 35A. The provision also contributed to a sense of regional identity and autonomy among the permanent residents, fostering a distinct cultural and political landscape. It became an integral part of the historical and political and historical narrative of the region, and discussions surrounding Article 35A often intersected with broader debates on the special status of J&K.

Controversies and Debates

While Article 35A was intended to protect the unique identity of the residents of J&K, it also became a source of numerous controversies. Critics argued that the provision led to discrimination against non-permanent residents of J&K and hindered the integration of the region with the rest of India. Legal challenges to Article 35A also questioned its constitutional and legal validity, leading to debates on the balance between the principles of non-discrimination and equality and special provisions for states.

The significance of Article 35A also became particularly pronounced in August 2019 when the Indian BJP's government abrogated Article 370, leading to the simultaneous revocation of Article 35A. This move sparked widespread discussions and dialogues on the implications for J&K's socio-political future and its integration into the broader Indian Union (Srivastava, [2019](#)).

Abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A by India

The abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A by the Indian government in August

2019 marked a transformative and historic moment in the socio-political landscape of J&K. These constitutional and legal provisions, which granted special privileges and autonomy to the region, had been sources of continuous contention since their inception. The move to revoke the special status of J&K initiated a series of changes that had profound implications for the demographics, governance, and future of the region.

Abrogation of Article 370

As stated earlier, Article 370 of the Indian Constitution granted a special status to the state of J&K, allowing it a significant degree of autonomy and uniqueness among other states of India. On August 5, 2019, the Indian government, led by the current Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), took an audacious step by revoking Article 370 through a special Presidential order. The move was accompanied by another resolution passed in the Indian Parliament, leading to the bifurcation of the state into two separate Union Territories – Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir.

The abrogation of Article 370 was met with mixed reactions from local and international media. The supporters of this article's abrogation argued that it would pave the way for the full integration of J&K into the Indian Union, providing equal opportunities and rights for its residents. Whereas, critics, on the other hand, expressed various concerns about the manner of abrogation in which the decision was implemented by the Indian Parliament and its potential impact on the special identity of the region (Rather, [2020](#)).

Abrogation of Article 35A

Similarly, likewise Article 370, Article 35A inserted into the Constitution through a

special Presidential order in 1954, granted special privileges and rights to the permanent residents' status of J&K. It also played a crucial role in determining property rights, residency laws, and socio-political dynamics in the region. The abrogation of Article 370 also led to the subsequent revocation of Article 35A. The revocation of Article 35A by the Indian government was viewed differently by various segments of society. While proponents argued that it would promote equal rights and inclusivity, opponents expressed various concerns about potential demographic changes and the erosion of the distinct cultural identity of the region (Ahmed & Shweta, 2022).

Process of Abrogation

The abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A by the Indian parliament involved a multi-step process:

Presidential Order

The process began with a special Presidential order issued on August 5, 2019. Subsequently, this order rendered Article 370 inoperative, effectively revoking the special status of J&K.

Parliamentary Resolution

Simultaneously, the Parliament of India passed a resolution supporting the abrogation of Article 370. This move had broad socio-political and economic implications as it required significant political consensus within the country.

Bifurcation of the State

The resolution also led to the reorganization of the state into two Union Territories – Ladakh and Jammu & Kashmir. The creation of Union Territories by the Indian parliament meant that these regions would have a direct administrative and executive

connection with the central government of India, bypassing the autonomy that the state of J&K had previously enjoyed.

Public Reaction and Communication Blockade

Following the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A, the region witnessed a series of security measures from the Indian government, including the restrictions on movement, imposition of a communication blockade, and deployment of additional security forces in the entire region of J&K. These security measures were aimed at maintaining law and order in the face of potential unrest that may cause after the abrogation of J&K.

The abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A by the Indian government triggered a range of responses domestically and internationally. While some segments in the country saw it as a step towards achieving greater integration between the state of J&K and other states of India, others expressed different concerns about the impact on human rights, autonomy, and the potential for increased unrest in the region. The move continues to shape the socio-political discourse surrounding J&K, with ongoing debates on the implications for the future and its relationship with India with the rest of the region (Venkatesan, [2019](#)).

Challenges for Pakistan

The following section will explain the several challenges faced by Pakistan in the context of the Kashmir conflict after the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A by the Indian government.

Diplomatic Isolation

Pakistan confronts a formidable challenge of diplomatic isolation in the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A by the Indian government in Kashmir. A

significant number of regional and world countries, including major global powers, have endorsed the actions, of India, further isolating Pakistan on the diplomatic front. The lack of widespread regional and international support hampers the ability of Pakistan to effectively advocate for its legitimate position on the Kashmir issue. This diplomatic isolation not only limits ambassadorial options but also negatively impacts the standing of Pakistan in regional and international forums.

Domestic Pressure

The successive governments of Pakistan face a substantial challenge in managing public sentiment and domestic expectations concerning the issue of Kashmir. Following the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A by the Indian government, there is heightened emotional and impulsive resonance within Pakistan, with the general public closely monitoring socio-economic and political developments in the region. The government of Pakistan is under pressure to address local citizen concerns, striking a delicate balance between asserting its legitimate commitment to the Kashmir cause and preventing undue escalation of general public sentiment that may lead to unrest. This domestic pressure poses a dual challenge for the governments of Pakistan: on one hand, the government must maintain a sense of solidarity and national unity, and on the other, it needs to navigate the intricacies of the Kashmir issue without exacerbating internal and external tensions (Ahmed & Parihar, 2023).

Terrorism Accusations

Pakistan also grapples with the formidable challenge of combating accusations of supporting militancy and terrorism in the region, which could potentially result in heightened international sanctions and scrutiny. The state-sponsored terrorism-

driven allegations, often entangled with the complex and changing dynamics of the Kashmir conflict, ultimately place Pakistan in a precarious diplomatic position. Managing this terrorism-related challenge necessitates a comprehensive approach from the government of Pakistan that involves addressing concerns regarding non-state actors (NSA) operating from Pakistani soil, enhancing counter-terrorism and counter-militancy measures, and collaborating transparently and effectively with the regional and international community (Grare, [2014](#)).

Economic Strains

The enduring conflict between India and Pakistan over the Kashmir issue places Pakistan under significant economic and financial strain, diverting crucial national resources that could otherwise be allocated to poverty alleviation programs and the socio-economic development of the country. The active military posturing and persistent tensions demand substantial financial investments in the defence sector, limiting the economic funds available for critical segments. The economic repercussions also extend beyond defence spending, affecting investors' trade, confidence, and overall economic stability of the country.

Human Rights Concerns

Pakistan also faces a significant challenge from regional and international media as allegations of human rights abuses in the Indian Occupied Kashmir garner global attention, potentially tarnishing the image of India. The reports of human rights violations, often linked to the conflict over the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A, demand a comprehensive and strategic response from Pakistan.

Radicalization Challenge

Pakistan confronts the risk of increased

radicalization and fundamentalist elements within its national borders due to the Kashmir conflict, posing formidable and severe internal security challenges for the country. The fervour surrounding the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A in Kashmir also has the potential to galvanize certain fanatic elements towards radical ideologies, impacting the social fabric of the country (Gillani et al., 2023).

Lack of International Consensus

Pakistan faces the considerable challenge of navigating a geopolitical and geostrategic landscape characterized by a lack of regional and international consensus on the Kashmir issue. The absence of a unified stance among the regional and global community makes it inherently difficult and challenging for Pakistan to secure widespread support for its legitimate position. The intricacies and complexities surrounding the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A by India have resulted in divergent opinions among global nations, inhibiting the formulation and execution of a cohesive international response.

Border Tensions

Pakistan also confronts the persistent challenge of potential escalation of tensions along the LoC and other bordering areas, carrying the ominous risk of military confrontations with India that directly imperil regional stability. The heightened tensions arising from territorial claims and disputes, particularly in the context of the J&K conflict, demand a subtle diplomatic balancing act. The risk of sporadic border clashes along the LoC underscores the need for comprehensive crisis management protocols, conflict-resolution mechanisms, and open channels of communication between the two regional arch-rivals, Pakistan and India. Subsequently, effective diplomacy from both countries becomes

paramount in averting the escalation of border tensions and military confrontations that could have far-reaching implications for regional and global security. Collaborative efforts through regional and international mediation, perhaps facilitated by platforms like the United Nations (UN), can offer a constructive path toward diffusing bilateral tensions and fostering a conducive environment for peaceful dialogue between both countries, emphasizing the urgency of preventing any military confrontations that could threaten broader regional stability and escalate the Kashmir conflict (Qusien & Robbins, [2023](#)).

Water Security

Pakistan is already second on the list of water-stressed countries following Afghanistan, grapples with a critical challenge to its water security, which is intricately tied to the Kashmir conflict. The Indus River is considered a lifeline for Pakistan's economic and agricultural activities of Pakistan, originates in the disputed region of Kashmir. The risk for Pakistan arises from the potential and possible alteration of water flow by India, with any significant changes impacting access to this vital resource of Pakistan. The subtle balance of water allocation agreements between India and Pakistan adds complexity to this challenge. Safeguarding water security is not only crucial for the socioeconomic stability of Pakistan but also accentuates the necessity of finding cooperative solutions to water-related challenges between both countries amid the complexities of the Kashmir conflict.

Proxy Warfare

Pakistan faces the complicated challenge of managing the use of several proxy groups as instruments of foreign policy, particularly in the context of the J&K conflict. While

employing proxy groups and non-state actors may be viewed as a strategic tool by Pakistan, it also carries the substantial risk of unintended dangerous consequences that can exacerbate destabilization in the region. The potential for these proxy groups to operate independently, beyond any control of state sponsors, raises various concerns about the broader security landscape (Rigi & Warner, [2023](#)).

Options for Pakistan

Diplomatic Engagement

To address the diplomatic and consular isolation resulting from the Kashmir conflict, Pakistan should intensify and sustain its diplomatic efforts. Prioritizing active engagement with important international stakeholders, including the United Nations, the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC), and influential nations, is imperative in this context. Through consistent dialogue and table talk, Pakistan can articulate its numerous concerns regarding the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A, seeking regional and international diplomatic support for a peaceful resolution. Utilizing bilateral and multilateral forums allows for a more comprehensive and elusive presentation of the position of Pakistan, fostering a better understanding of the intricacies and complexities surrounding the Kashmir issue. By aligning its legitimate stance with international norms and values, and emphasizing the importance of resolving the bilateral conflict through dialogue, Pakistan can work towards building a more favourable diplomatic ambience and garnering broader international support for its cause on the global stage.

Bilateral Dialogue Advocacy

To mitigate the challenges posed by the bilateral Kashmir conflict, Pakistan should

strongly advocate for bilateral table-talk talks with India. Prioritizing open communication and diplomatic channels is crucial for addressing underlying complex issues and fostering a peaceful resolution of incessant disputes. Encouraging both nations to engage in result-oriented and substantive dialogue, allows for direct communication on sensitive and profound matters related to Kashmir. Emphasizing the importance of mutual understanding and diplomatic solutions can pave the way for confidence-building measures (CBMs) and the creation of conducive environments for direct negotiations. By actively promoting the resumption of meaningful and substantive bilateral discussions, Pakistan can also demonstrate its national commitment to resolving the J&K issue through peaceful means, highlighting the need for both countries to work collaboratively toward peace and stability in the region. Persistent advocacy for bilateral and multilateral dialogue showcases the diplomatic commitment and maturity of Pakistan to finding mutual ground for the betterment of the entire region (Babar, [2023](#)).

Humanitarian Diplomacy Initiative

Pakistan can also strategically employ humanitarian diplomacy to address the Kashmir conflict by placing and prioritizing a spotlight on human rights concerns. By actively highlighting alleged human rights abuses and concerns on the locale in the region, Pakistan aims to generate regional and international support and sympathy for its stance. Utilizing diplomatic channels and engaging with regional and international human rights organizations, Pakistan can present evidence of massive violations, seeking independent investigations to ensure accountability and transparency. By framing the issue of J&K in humanitarian terms, Pakistan may gain traction in regional and international forums,

mobilizing support for a more rights-based and compassionate approach to the Kashmir conflict. This diplomatic strategy also emphasizes the importance of universal human rights concerns, fostering agreements and alliances with nations and organizations that share concerns about the well-being of the local people in the affected region. Through humanitarian diplomacy, Pakistan seeks to create a regional and global consensus on addressing human rights concerns in Kashmir and ultimately advocating for a peaceful resolution to the conflict.

Economic Development

To alleviate the financial-cum-economic strain resulting from the J&K conflict, Pakistan should also advocate and prioritize economic development in the Indian-administered Kashmir region. By directing financial resources towards education, infrastructure, and healthcare, Pakistan can significantly enhance and improve living conditions for the local population. This inclusive approach not only fosters stability in the region but also demonstrates Pakistan's tangible commitment to the welfare of the people. Investing in skill development, job creation, and sustainable projects can further contribute to poverty alleviation and economic growth, addressing the root causes of regional discontent. Moreover, showcasing the positive and productive impact of such development initiatives can enhance the international image of Pakistan and garner support for its diplomatic efforts in promoting the well-being of the J&K population. By coupling diplomatic initiatives with economic development, Pakistan can accentuate its commitment to fostering prosperity and stability in the region, contributing to a more sustainable and comprehensive resolution of the Kashmir conflict (Shaheen et al., [2023](#)).

Counter-terrorism Measures Strategy

Pakistan should also implement comprehensive and concrete counter-terrorism measures to address concerns regarding militancy and terrorism, signalling a strong national commitment to stability and peace and stability in the region. This involves conducting targeted counter-terrorism operations, enhancing surveillance and intelligence-sharing mechanisms, and implementing stricter border controls to prevent the infiltration of extremist and militant elements. By actively participating in regional and international collaborations to combat militancy and terrorism, Pakistan can demonstrate its national commitment to global security. Ensuring effective law enforcement, strengthening domestic counter-terrorism legislation, and promoting legal and judicial accountability for terrorism-related activities are essential components of this comprehensive strategy. Additionally, fostering cooperation with religious leaders to promote societal tolerance, investing in community-based programs for counter-radicalization and counter-militancy and overall moderation can contribute to long-term stability in the region. Transparently communicating these multifaceted initiatives to the regional and international community reinforces the commitment of Pakistan to eradicating militancy and terrorism, thereby building trust and addressing concerns among regional and global partners. A multifaceted and proactive counter-terrorism strategy underlines the dedication of Pakistan to maintaining stability and peace in the region (Sargana & Hussain, [2023](#)).

Promote Track II Diplomacy

Pakistan can also bolster its negotiation and diplomatic efforts by encouraging Track II and Track III diplomacy, involving non-official channels, and media personalities,

and engaging the respective civil society, scholars, academicians, and experts to foster frequent people-to-people contacts between the people of the two regional arch-rivals. This approach aims to build mutual understanding and confidence at the grassroots level, facilitating a stable environment conducive to more formal diplomatic negotiation and discussions. By promoting joint initiatives, cultural exchanges, and collaborative projects, Track II and Track III diplomacy can contribute to bridging the trust deficit between India and Pakistan and breaking down stereotypes on both sides. Encouraging mutual bilateral dialogue beyond official government channels can create several opportunities for shared perspectives, paving the way for more stable and resilient diplomatic relations. This strategy also underlines the importance of involving diverse voices from every community in the peace-building process, demonstrating a mutual commitment to resolving the J&K conflict through collaborative and inclusive approaches that extend beyond traditional and official state-level negotiations (Majeed & Hammed, [2023](#)).

Enhance Intelligence Cooperation

To counter numerous accusations of supporting state-sponsored terrorism and address national security challenges, Pakistan should also prioritize and enhance bilateral intelligence cooperation with regional and international agencies. Collaborating closely with global intelligence counterparts can lead to sharing critical information, more effective counter-terrorism efforts, and coordinating different responses to potential regional threats. This proactive and pre-emptive approach not only reinforces the commitment of Pakistan to global security but also helps dispel numerous concerns related to cross-border heinous activities. Strengthening bilateral

intelligence ties can contribute to building trust and confidence with the international community, showcasing the dedication of Pakistan to combating militancy and terrorism on a global scale. By actively participating in collaborative regional initiatives, joint military operations, and information-sharing mechanisms, Pakistan can demonstrate and showcase its resolve to address national and regional security challenges comprehensively, fostering a more secure and conducive regional environment and mitigating the numerous risks of being isolated diplomatically.

Water Diplomacy

In response to the water security challenges, Pakistan should actively engross and engage in water diplomacy, focusing on ensuring the equitable distribution of water resources, particularly those originating from the disputed Kashmir region. By initiating dialogue and negotiations with India and collaborating on elusive and comprehensive water management agreements like the Indus Water Treaty (1960), Pakistan can work towards preventing any questionable actions that may adversely impact its water security in the region. Advocating for regional and international mediation or involvement from neutral parties like the World Bank in the case of the Indus Water Treaty (1960) can provide a structured and comprehensive framework for dialogue and negotiations. Emphasizing the shared regional responsibility for sustainable water usage from both countries and highlighting the potential humanitarian consequences in case of the water shortage in Pakistan and water-related disputes can garner support on the global stage. A proactive water diplomacy approach not only safeguards the water security of Pakistan but also positions it as a responsible steward of shared regional natural resources,

contributing to cooperation and stability in the region (Sargana et al., [2023](#)).

Domestic Narrative Management

To address the numerous challenges of managing domestic or national expectations amid the J&K conflict, Pakistan should implement a comprehensive and elusive domestic narrative management and executive strategy. Effective communication between the government and people is essential, and the elected government should actively engage with the state's public, emphasizing its national commitment to the J&K cause while promoting the pursuit of peaceful solutions with its counterpart. Transparency, limpidity, and regular updates on diplomatic and ambassadorial efforts can help manage national expectations, fostering a sense of national unity and understanding among the populace of this complex issue between both nations. Utilizing various communication channels, including public addresses, media, public addresses, rallies, and online social media platforms, the government can also shape a narrative that highlights the complexities of the Kashmir issue and the ongoing diplomatic initiatives taken by Pakistan. Public discourse and public addresses should emphasize the importance of peaceful resolution of J&K conflict over escalatory measures, reinforcing the dedication of the government to the peace and stability of the region. Town hall meetings, educational programs, and dialogues with key stakeholders can further contribute to shaping an informed and cohesive public opinion. By managing domestic expectations effectively, Pakistan can create an environment conducive to diplomatic efforts by fostering a unified national stance aimed at resolving the J&K conflict (Hussain et al., [2023](#)).

Regional Cooperation

To enhance peace and stability in the South Asian region, Pakistan should actively explore different opportunities for regional integration and cooperation. Emphasizing common challenges and shared interests, Pakistan can also engage neighbouring countries in mutual collaborative efforts to address issues such as security, economic development, and environmental concerns. In contemporary political development, regional cooperation promotes mutual understanding by fostering a sense of collective responsibility and contributing to an environment conducive to peaceful conflict resolution. Platforms such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) can be utilized to facilitate cooperation and dialogue. By building partnerships and mutual trust with neighbouring nations, Pakistan can also contribute to the creation of an interconnected and more stable South Asia. This approach of regional cooperation not only addresses numerous regional challenges collectively but also helps in resolving several bilateral issues, including the J&K conflict, through shared regional initiatives and diplomatic channels. The promotion of regional cooperation in South Asia underscores the commitment of Pakistan to fostering stability and peace in South Asia, showcasing a collaborative and proactive approach to addressing common challenges. (Sugandi et al., [2024](#))

Conclusion

To conclude, the J&K Conflict, particularly in the aftermath of the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A, continues to present intricate options and challenges for Pakistan. The revocation of these constitutional provisions by the Indian government in August 2019 also marked a significant shift in the status quo of the J&K, intensifying and complicating the already

intricate geopolitical landscape in South Asia. Pakistan also faces diplomatic isolation pertaining to the J&K conflict as it strives to garner regional and international support for its stance on Kashmir. The global perspective often regards the issue as a bilateral matter between Pakistan and India, hindering various efforts of Pakistan to rally widespread backing for its position. Internally, the different challenge lies in countering extremist elements and managing security concerns that could escalate multilayered tensions in the region, posing a threat to peace and stability. Economically, the J&K conflict diverts national resources away from socio-economic and political development in Pakistan. The continuous uncertainty surrounding the region also deters foreign investments in the country, impacting the overall economic well-being of Pakistan. Additionally, addressing humanitarian concerns such as human rights violations and internal displacement poses a practical and moral challenge for Pakistan. However, amid these various challenges, Pakistan also has several options to navigate the complexities of this bilateral conflict. Diplomacy and negotiation remain a crucial tool, and Pakistan can continue engaging with regional and international forums to raise public awareness about the situation and build diplomatic pressure on the arch-rival, India. Bilateral and multilateral talks with India provide an avenue for constructive and meaningful dialogue, seeking common ground for never-ending resolution. Ancillary, humanitarian initiatives within South Asia underscore the commitment of Pakistan to addressing the needs of the affected Kashmiri population, contributing to a more stable and peaceful environment. Collaborating with several regional stakeholders and advocating for a table-talk and peaceful resolution also represents a viable and feasible option, and

Pakistan can leverage its bilateral relationships with countries like China and the United States to encourage mutual dialogue with India. Auxiliary, internal reforms, aimed at ensuring internal security and countering extremism, are essential for fostering peace and stability in Pakistan and the wider region. The way forward also involves a subtle balance between regional collaboration, diplomatic efforts, and

internal measures to address the multifaceted challenges posed by the J&K Conflict after the abrogation of Article 370 and Article 35A. The pursuit of a sustainable resolution also requires strategic diplomacy, steadfast commitment, and a recognition of the various complexities inherent in this long-standing geopolitical issue between both countries.

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