

**Strategic Shifts in India-Pakistan Relations: Pulwama Attack and
Abrogation of Article 370**

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Abstract

India-Pakistan relations have been strained since independence, primarily due to continuous political, territorial and security disputes, with Kashmir oftentimes at the centre of the conflict. Historical as well as on-going conflict showcase numerous political, diplomatic and trade repercussions for the nations, particularly for Pakistan. This paper examines the strategic shifts in bilateral relations of India and Pakistan following Pulwama attack and revocation of article 370 in 2019. Specifically when it comes to highlighting the impact on politics, both domestically and internationally, the diplomatic fallout and the fluctuating trade relations. The study thus examines the positions of India and Pakistan from these perspectives, shedding light onto their arguments. The paper concludes with providing policy recommendations for signalling the direction for improving bilateral relations, focused on diplomacy, conflict resolution, regional stability and improved economic conditions.

Key Words: *Pakistan-India relations, Pulwama Attack, Article 370 abrogation, Kashmir conflict, Diplomatic implications, trade relations*

Introduction

Kashmir remains a core issue of conflict between India and Pakistan since the British partition of 1947, straining relations between these two neighboring nuclear states of South Asia. The Kashmir issue has led to several wars: in 1948, 1965, 1971, a limited war in Kargil in 1999 and military standoffs in 1987 and 2002. Despite all attempts at resolution, political and military tensions continue to shape regional dynamics. Besides Kashmir, other contentious issues—including the Indus Water Treaty, the Siachen Glacier, Sir Creek, trade and commerce, pipelines, and terrorism also strain relations (Sattar, 2017).

The economic relation between the two largest economies in Asia as Pakistan the 19th largest economy and India being the 3rd largest economy in Asia is very fragile due to multiple military confrontations and political instability in the countries the economic potential between India and Pakistan remains untapped. Due to political differences between the two neighbours', trade relations have not been strengthened and both hesitate to improve trade ties (Naz, 2012).

However, year 2019 was decisive for their relations as this longstanding historical Kashmir dispute reached a critical juncture in the wake of the Pulwama attack on February 14, 2019, killing approximately 40 Indian paramilitary personnel escalated the tensions dramatically. Pakistan condemned the violence and offered dialogue, while the Indian government unilaterally abrogated Article 370 on August 5, 2019, stripping Kashmir of its special status, as this move not only disregarded the promise of United Nations resolutions but India's strategic shift in its relation with Pakistan and especially Kashmir issue. These back to back profound incidents have had serious implications for bilateral relations for both countries.

Historical Context

To understand fully the complexity of relations between India and Pakistan, we have to look at the history of their relations. The British before leaving India had allowed the 560 Indian **states to** choose one option, allegiance with Pakistan, **or** India or remain independent. The Hindu **Maharaja of** Muslim-majority Jammu and Kashmir **Hari Singh** made the situation of the region complicated as initially he sought independence but local pressure to form ties with Pakistan **made**

him look for military assistance from India, resulting in the controversial deal of the Instrument of Accession on October 26, 1947 (Gupta, 1968). Additionally, during the drafting of the Indian Constitution in 1949, in the Article 370, the region was granted special status to recognize its unique characteristics, providing it with a degree of autonomy (Swadimath et al., 2024). However, Indian governments had been gradually reduced this autonomy, eventually culminating in the upcoming years.

Consequently diplomatic relations were strained due to the coercive manners by which Kashmir issue was handled. The very first diplomatic decision of Hindu Maharaja Hari Singh was rather coercive than voluntary, allowing Indian control over defence, foreign affairs, and communications, while ostensibly maintaining the Maharaja's control over internal matters (Prem Nath Kaul v. The State of Jammu and Kashmir, 1959). The decision led to first Indo-Pakistan conflict and subsequent involvement of UN Security Council, which passed the resolution 47, calling for a ceasefire and plebiscite to determine the region's future (Centre for Preventive Actions, 2024).

Several agreements were signed throughout history, aimed at mitigating tensions between India and Pakistan, specifically regarding Kashmir issue. For instance, the Karachi agreement 1949, established Ceasefire Line (CFL) in occupied Kashmir. Another agreement was signed between India and Pakistan, termed as Tashkent Agreement 1965, for withdrawing armed forces by 1966. Shimla Agreement of 1972 was signed by the two countries following 1971 Indo-Pakistan war. It established a Line of Control (LOC), splitting Kashmir into separate administered regions and confined India-Pakistan disputes to bilateral resolution. The Lahore declaration 1999, aimed at reduction of accidental or unauthorized use of nuclear weapons and peace building measures.

Whereas, the diplomatic efforts continued in the 21st century with the 2001-2008 Composite Dialogues, including the Agra Summit 2001, aimed at addressing various key issues including Kashmir issue (Padder, 2012). Marking significant though unsuccessful diplomatic efforts (Ray, 2001). Subsequent years witnessed fluctuations, with escalating military tensions while diplomatic efforts continued mediation. Further significantly influenced by developments such as Uri attack in 2016, the Pulwama Attack in February, 2019 and abrogation of article 370 in August, 2019.

In terms of economic implications throughout history of the two countries, the trade relations between India and Pakistan have followed the same fluctuating trajectory as influenced by political

and diplomatic developments. Trade relations between the two nations have often been a reflection of the broader political climate. For instance, after the 2008 Mumbai attacks, Pakistan's exports to India increased slightly, from \$235 million in 2009 to \$275 million in 2010. The export figures remained somewhat stable. Whereas, the resumption of dialogue in 2011 appears to foster trade, with exports steadily increasing. In 2011, exports stood at \$273 million and continued to rise to \$403 million by 2013. This period was the peak for Pakistan's exports to India, showing a recovery and growth after diplomatic engagement.

After BJP had assumed power in India in 2014, there was a dip in Pakistan's exports, from \$403 million in 2013 to \$329 million in 2014. Despite this, trade stabilized during BJP's tenure, with exports fluctuating but generally around \$300-380 million, reflecting a relatively stable but cautious trade relationship. Furthermore, Pakistan's imports from India during period of 2009-2022 foresaw similar patterns after resumption dialogue in 2011-2013 had been evident as imports from India remained high, peaking at \$1870 million (\$1.87 billion) in 2013.

The figures reflected growing economic interdependence during this period of diplomacy. Under the BJP's rule, Pakistan's imports from India initially increased, reaching \$2000 million (\$2 billion) in 2014. However, trade began to decrease in subsequent years, reflecting both political challenges and economic shifts. By 2018, imports were at \$1930 million, still relatively strong but showing some decline compared to the previous peak.

Pulwama attack (February 14, 2019)

On February 14, 2019, a suicide bombing occurred in Pulwama in Indian administered Jammu and Kashmir. Termed as one of the deadliest assaults on Indian Central Reserve Forces, killing more than 40 members. It was claimed to be an attack by Jaish-e-Muhammad, specifically by a young Kashmiri, Adil Ahmad Dar, who had allegedly been mistreated by Indian forces. Following the attack, tensions between India and Pakistan heightened into a military crisis. On February 26, India claimed to have conducted airstrikes on (JeM) camp in Balakot, Pakistan, as tactical measure to prevent future terrorist attacks. India stressed the strike was non-military, targeting terrorists while avoiding civilian harm. Pakistan denied significant damage, claiming the Indian strike was unsuccessful (Masahiro, 2022).

At this time, the Prime Minister of Pakistan, Imran Khan, faced internal pressure to take action and respond to the aggression from India, igniting national security debates aimed at enhancing anti-terror operations (Minhas et al., 2019). Pakistan, in retaliation, carried out airstrikes near military targets on the Indian side of the Line of Control (LoC). Although deliberately avoided causing damage to prevent further escalation. The ensuing aerial combat led to Pakistan capturing an Indian pilot after downing a MiG-21. This incident also underscored Pakistan's shift in its proxy war strategy post-2008, with attacks focusing more on military targets in Jammu & Kashmir to avoid international condemnation, as noted in the aftermath of the Mumbai attacks.

India's Foreign Policy

India's foreign policy reflected a broader shift in its security posture under the BJP government. Initial response of the Indian government to Pulwama attack had been a staunch condemnation, labelling it as a cowardly and heinous act of Jaish-e-Mohammed, claiming it as a Pakistan-backed terrorist organization. Further emphasising its safeguard for national security, urging Pakistan to cease its support for terrorist groups, dismantle their operational infrastructure. While urging the international community to support designation of the terrorists like JeM Chief Masood Azhar under the UN Security Council's 1267 Sanctions Committee.

Furthermore, ambassadors were withdrawn, along with MFN position, as well as suspension of cross-border transport and rail services. Additionally, threats regarding retraction of Indus Water Treaty were made, security for separatist leaders in Jammu Kashmir retracted and efforts taken to isolate Pakistan on the international front (Ahmad, Ullah, & Munazza, 2022). India's coercive diplomacy prompted BJP governments to escalate the first ever airstrikes in Pakistan since 1971, showcasing a shift from military restraint to active retaliation. Reportedly considering launching a series of air strikes, although the plans never materialized since the situation de-escalated in the next two days.

Pakistan's Foreign Policy

In contrast, Pakistan denied any involvement in the Pulwama attack and took a defensive stance, claiming it was an indigenously engineered, designed and executed plan. Prime Minister Imran Khan highlighted the lack of proof of Pakistan's involvement in the attacks. Whereas, in a press release by Ministry of Foreign Affairs, latest revelations by Mr. Satya Pal Malik, former governor

of India were made. His statement elaborated India's vindication of Pakistan while using the sham victimhood narrative of Hindutva. The Pakistani government requested the International community to investigate these revelations (Ministry of Foreign Affairs | Government of Pakistan, 2023). After airstrikes by India, Pakistan also retaliated where M-21 Fighter pilot crossing the LoC was shot down, the Wing Commander was captured and reiterating their position of retaliating in case of further threat.

International Response

Globally, the Pulwama incident attracted widespread attention, India also sought international support to internationalize the issue. It gained significant support from USA and other nations expressing support for India's right to self-defence. The UN called on both nations to de-escalate the situation to further prevent the conflict while UN right chief strongly condemned the attack on Indian security in Kashmir (Saberin, 2019). The involvement of the international community played a critical role in preventing further military escalation, particularly with U.S. pressure on Pakistan to release captured Wing Commander Abhinandan Varthaman as a gesture of peace (Cherian, 2021).

Abrogation of Article 370 (August 5, 2019)

On August 5, 2019, Indian Home Minister Amit Shah announced the revocation of Article 370, which stripped Jammu and Kashmir's of its constitutional autonomy. The Indian government justified this as a step for national integration and development. The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) had long advocated for the removal of these articles, which had been a part of their manifesto for the 2019 elections (Rahman & Muneer, 2020). The BJP frame the move as a necessary measure to combat what they described as discriminatory behaviour against non-Kashmiris and to weaken the Muslim majority in the region through demographic changes (*ibid*).

The abrogation was widely criticized as unilateral and illegal, as it lacked support from public opinion and any consent from the Jammu and Kashmir state assembly. The action was considered illegal according to the Indian Constitution and international law (Ray, 2019; Hedge & Kishore, 2019); it was deemed unethical, unconstitutional, and unlawful. This revocation was meant to be a clear violation of United Nations resolutions by several observers, as according to which a plebiscite would only decide the future of Kashmir. The India is altering the status quo challenging

the survival of Kashmiris and changing the demographics. This action has vital implications for the livelihoods and self-determination of the people of Kashmir and could be ignored.

Consequences for the People of Kashmir

The revocation resulted in severe and immediate consequences for the Jammu and Kashmir's people as an increase was observed in military personnel's number, widespread curfews happened which resulted in the harsh human rights violations, with the addition of arbitrary arrests and systemic violence (Sandhu, 2019). There was also reports of extrajudicial executions and killings, enforced disappearances with restrictions on freedom of speech which created an environment where people are feared and oppressed (Dagia, 2019). The BJP above mentioned strategy of demographic change is an existential threat to the identity of the people of Kashmir which aims to alter the demography thus it rises tensions and more deepen the pre-existing conflict (Shamim, 2019).

Moreover, the Indian government has intensified local insurgency movements and suppressed dissent through draconian laws, effectively criminalising self-determination. The heightened military presence and surveillance have led to a culture of fear, violence and repression. The Kashmiri's had responded with increased resilience and defying the region's demographic and political landscape. After the incident, despite the military presence and strict curfews imposed, the people of Kashmiris intensified their resistance as well. Although it met with staunch action and brutality against the protestors. However, even if the resistance was snubbed by the Indian troops, the Kashmiris have continued to demand self-determination.

The former Jammu and Kashmir Governor Satyapal Malik criticised the Modi and his government for politicising the issue for electoral gains (Hussain, 2023). It highlighted that BJP linked national security issues with political interests as could be seen in the opposition leader's statements, Mamata Banerjee, condemned the BJP as it is playing with the blood of our soldiers and exploiting their sacrifices for some political gains.

The public concern about the national security increased in India as surveys indicate that Modi's approval rate increases from 36% in January to 51% in March 2019 in the aftermath of the Pulwama crisis. In response to these changing patterns, Pakistan also introduced its first national security policy in 2022, to address the rising Hindutva Politics in India which is associated with

Hindu nationalism and disturbing the region's peace (Hussain, 2021). This policy was meant to combat extremism and promoting regional peace and stability.

Indian Diplomatic Strategy

India had been multifaceted in its diplomatic efforts and responses by focusing on managing the international perceptions about and clarifying its position while addressing the concerns raised by international community. The India government had a policy of making Kashmir issue an internal matter rather than internationalising it. The act did gather criticism from neighbouring countries and internationally from UNSC as well, in reference to the human rights abuses in the region. On the other hand, its key allies had largely offered their support to India's stance, recognising it as a sovereign decision (Shah et al., 2020).

Pakistan's Diplomatic Efforts

Pakistan strongly condemned the unilateral action of abrogating Article 370 by India which is altering the status of occupied Jammu and Kashmir. The move was labelled as violation of international agreements and describing it as infringement on sovereignty of Kashmiris. The Pakistani government urged the UN and international community to intervene in stopping India from changing the disputed region's demography.

Pakistan took immediate steps, such as recalling its ambassador and imposing trade restrictions while seeking international support from allies like the United States and China as well as at international forums like United Nations. The issue of Kashmir was also highlighted by the Prime Minister of Pakistan during his address to the United Nations General Assembly in 2018. However despite several efforts, Pakistan is unable to gain the support of international community needed against Indian aggression in the region.

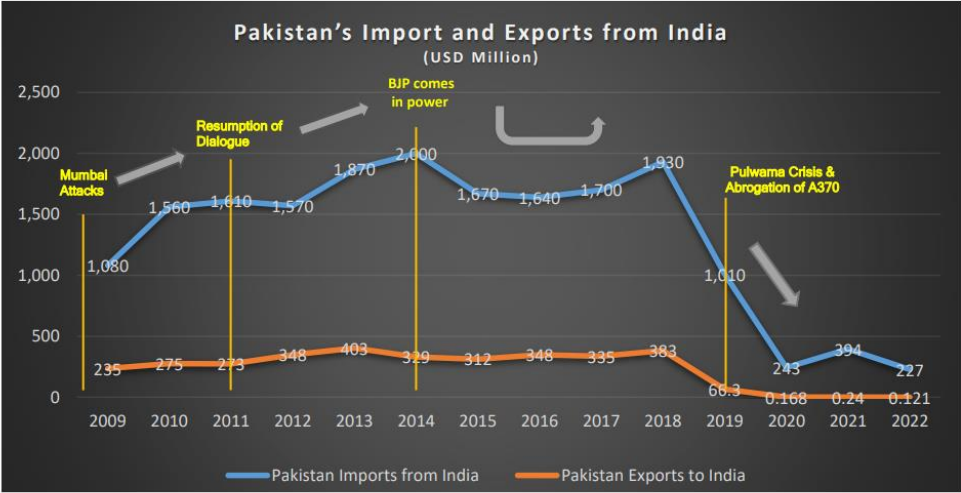
International Response

In the aftermath of this incident, it assumed a centre stage around the globe, resulting in an international blow out. The UN Human Rights Council condemned the communication blackout in Kashmir, describing it as a "form of collective punishment." Various human rights organisations, including Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch etc. highlighted serious human rights concerns of the territory. The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, along with

lawmakers from the UK and US and members of parliament, also expressed alarm over the situations. Non-governmental organizations such as Genocide Watch, international watchdog keeps an eye on international disputes, issuing a genocide alert for Muslims in Jammu & Kashmir (Akhtar, 2024). The international response was notable, with countries like China and organizations like the United Nations Security Council re-engaging in discussions about Kashmir, an issue with reduced attention in previous years (Kocis, 2019).

Economic Impact for Pakistan (2019 onwards)

The Pulwama crisis was an exacerbating factor of the abrogation of Article 370, which had serious economic consequences for Pakistan-India trade. Imports from India into Pakistan in 2019 declined to a very minuscule amount of \$1010 million (\$1.01 billion) in 2018, to as low as \$1930 million (\$1.93 billion). Imports further declined to \$243 million in the year 2020, indicating an acute break in trade relations. Although they rebounded slightly to \$394 million in 2021, they dropped again to \$227 million in 2022, which depicts another freeze in trade relations. Pakistan's exports to India also underwent changes. Exports declined sharply to \$66.3 million in 2019 and almost came to a grinding halt during 2020 and 2021 at \$0.168 million and \$0.24 million respectively. In 2022, exports fell further to \$0.121 million, even touching an all-time low in economic relations as the economy plunged into a situation of heightened tensions.



Major political and security-related events have had a consequent negative influence on the trade volumes across these past years, with major slumps in transaction volume notably observed

following the Mumbai attacks, Pulwama crisis, and Article 370 abrogation. Resumption of dialogue through diplomatic engagements has led to the positive growth in trade. The Pulwama attack followed by the abrogation of Article 370 across 2019 led to an abrupt slump, where both exports and imports crashed. The same pattern has continued, with a trade relationship remaining really flat with very little recovery through 2022.

During the entire period, the imports from India to Pakistan were much more than its exports to India. Even in the relatively improved periods of relations, the statistical trade deficit with India continued to prevail wherein Pakistan imported much more from India than it could export back to India.

Formal trade relations have been done away with but the informal trade persisted through third party countries like Dubai, where Indian goods reached Pakistan with varied labels, even Chinese. Such smuggling, though costly and not so effective for the Pakistani consumer, brings into light the economic benefits of normalization of trade relations between the two countries (Taneja et al., 2024).

After the Pulwama attack and the nullification of Article 370, non-tariff barriers have only worsened the economic relations. Visa and travel restrictions, long clearances at customs clearance processes, controls on movement of goods, having fewer ports and customs ports to handle Pakistan exports, and use of trade defence measures against Pakistan all act as deterrents. This denies Pakistan an opportunity to enhance exports with India (Naqvi et al., 2014). In addition, they both allocated defense budgets according to the increasing tensions, which had been directly influencing social and economic issues like inflation and poverty. Imports from Pakistan had declined to US\$ 3 million by the calendar year 2023-2024, mere 0.1% of the total. Conversely, Pakistan imported \$1 billion worth of goods from India during the same period, despite the hurdles. Observers note that both countries have a potential to conduct trade worth billions of dollars annually (Kathuria, 2024). Key exports and imports include fruits, vegetables, meat, cargo ships, nuclear boilers, pharmaceutical products, textile material, raw sugar and some chemicals.

In the immediate aftermath of the Pulwama attack, India withdrew Pakistan's Most Favoured Nation (MFN) status, which had been granted under SAARC initiatives in 1996, and raised tariffs on Pakistani imports by 200% (Barman, 2022). Pakistan, in turn, formally suspended all trade relations with India following the revocation of Article 370. According to the UN Conference on

Trade and Development, bilateral trade between the two countries was of the order of 2.8 USD billion in 2018. The suspension of trade had a more significant impact on Pakistan than India, as Pakistan's exports to India constituted 1.62% of its exports, while India's exports to Pakistan constituted 0.73% of its exports (Izarali, 2020).

Analysis

The abrogation of Article 370 significantly escalated tensions between India and Pakistan, particularly in the context of the Pulwama attack that occurred earlier on February 14, 2019. The attack reignited the historical grievances and significantly influenced the 2019 Indian elections, allowing the Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi and the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) to capitalize on anti-Pakistan sentiment, resulting to secure 303 seats, a notable increase from 282 in 2014.

Prime Minister Modi's government leveraged the attack to blame Pakistan without a detailed investigation, a tactic aimed at isolating Pakistan internationally. His rhetoric of military strength and revenge resonated deeply with the public, making escalation in bilateral tensions inevitable. This dynamic highlights how short-term political gains can sometimes overshadow long-term strategic interests.

Modi's handling of the crisis also affected civil-military relations in India as could be better through Huntington's framework, which highlights the shift from objective to subjective civilian control, where military actions are politically exploited, potentially undermining military professionalism. The administration further bolstered its national security narrative by launching military initiatives like 'Mission Shakti' to showcase India's defence military capabilities. Following the Pulwama attack, India focus on counter-terrorism and national security intensified, framing the revocation of Article 370 as essential for addressing these threats.

The geopolitical ramifications of the abrogation extend beyond bilateral tensions. The revocation undermines the rights of Kashmiris while complicating India-Pakistan relations against a backdrop of shifting regional dynamics, particularly following the U.S. withdrawal from Afghanistan

(Usman et al., 2017). The security dynamics in South Asia, characterized by historical conflicts and enduring rivalries, has been further destabilised.

Two major obstacles hinder peace in South Asia: resource inequalities and ineffective governance. These unaddressed challenges perpetuate negative peace, where conflicts are dormant but unresolved and can erupt at any time, creating underlying tensions that persist beneath the surface. In essence, while there may be a lack of active conflict, the potential for conflict remains due to these unresolved issues.

India's aggressive posture under Prime Minister Modi contrasts sharply with Pakistan's defensive stance as Modi's administration frequently employs nationalist rhetoric, amplified by media outlets, which complicates diplomatic relations.

Since the Pulwama attack and revocation of article 370, there appears to be stagnation in diplomatic relations between India and Pakistan. Pakistan's foreign policy has been hampered by internal crises and a lack of consensus on engaging with India. On the other hand, India's minimalistic approach, supported by its international image and regional dominance, places the onus on Pakistan to address Kashmir-related preconditions before engaging in meaningful dialogue.

Ultimately, it appears that the conflict on Kashmir is an ideological one. A strong government in India wanting to talk only on their own terms and a civil military power play in Pakistan have made it difficult to have any meaningful dialogue. India's engagement with great powers, particularly since 1991, like the US, has made its military potential, economic weight and diplomatic stature rise, giving it a hegemonic and geostrategic advantage in South Asia.

With rising inflation and unstable economic and political conditions, Pakistan must first gauge its standing and resolve its internal issues to gain credibility in presenting its arguments or pre-conditions on international stage, including resolving the Kashmir issue. Moving forwards in its relations with India, Pakistan perhaps needs to acknowledge India's regional dominance and its favourable international image of 'Brand India' as a soft, powerful and peaceful country. This recognition would help Pakistan strategize its next steps in formulating favourable diplomatic conditions with India. For instance, countering India's regional hegemony and addressing concerns over interference, violence and documented atrocities against Muslims.

Despite tensions, there is an argument for formalising trade between India and Pakistan, which could benefit both economies, particularly Pakistan's struggling economy, characterised by low growth and high inflation. The business community in Pakistan urges the government to negotiate favourable trade terms with India, as increased trade could lower imports costs and stabilises Pakistan's economy. Economic engagement could also strengthen Pakistan's position on the Kashmir issue (Sami, 2024). For instance, examples from international relations, such as U.S.-China-, India-China and China-Taiwan trade, illustrate how nations set political differences aside for economic benefit. Pakistan could potentially learn from these examples, recognising the importance of separating economic relations from political conflicts.

Conclusion

Consequent to the discussion, the Pulwama attack followed by abrogation of Article 370 marks a watershed moment in the Indo-Pak relationship, worsening ideological fault lines and raising serious concerns about regional stability. Specifically, the ground situation in Jammu and Kashmir remains charged, with communications blackouts, political detentions, and rife human rights abuses. For any believable settlement between India and Pakistan regarding the Kashmir question among others, renewed commitment to peaceful dialogue should be appropriate. Both countries must take into consideration the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, and redress of historical grievances that have long been a fuel to conflict in this region. Furthermore, International intervention and economic cooperation could provide channels to peace, but the future of India-Pakistan relations hinges largely on the willingness of both nations to engage in an open and constructive dialogue.

Policy Recommendations

- 1.** Pakistan should discuss the formation of a joint council of trade with India, which in some form will be similar to the one in the India-Bangladesh CEPA, which will consequently streamline bilateral trade and reinforce co-operation. Third-party diplomatic facilitation might provide an impetus for the strengthening of such bilateral relations while at the same time encouraging truly stable, mutually beneficial exchange relations.
- 2.** Track 2 and Track 3 diplomacy should be supported to improve the management of conflicts and their resolution between India and Pakistan. In this regard, informal

dialogues, religious and cricket diplomacy, people-to-people exchanges, along with CBMs, could be ways in which tensions decrease and mutual understanding increases. These will complement Track 1 as a more solid ground for enabling bilateral formal negotiations.

- 3.** Pakistan and India should reboot bilateral relations by launching new or reviving diplomatic initiatives constructed on mutual respect, in the wake of such useful agreements as the Indus Waters Treaty and Liaqat-Nehru Pact. Future dialogues will have to focus on peaceful coexistence and determine frameworks that endure political change, committing to a long-term vision that prioritizes economic cooperation, cultural exchange, and conditions for conflict resolution.
- 4.** Regional cooperation and economic stability are supposed to be the levers for improved trade relations to augment the economy of Pakistan. Regional projects, such as TAPI, are intended to stabilize ties with Afghanistan and improve the credibility of Track 1 diplomacy. Formal trade routes and negotiations on import tariffs may be achieved to reduce them further to ensure economic integration and sustainable growth.
- 5.** India and Pakistan can collaborate in launching a Bilateral Economic Forum, which will focus on trade, investment, and technological exchange. This will expedite the meetings between business leaders, policymakers, economists, and with mutual interest in the economy and area of cooperation, drawing lessons from the Indo-US Business Council. This will increase Sectoral agreements, joint venture, and remove numerous barriers to trade.
- 6.** Cultural ties can, therefore, be an important area to bridge the gap. Pakistan and India can also host cultural exchange programs, art festivals, and joint academic conferences to people-to-people connections. Some forms of co-operative projects in film and music works along with literary projects have surfaced on shared heritage and building of empathy among citizens that influences politics accordingly.

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