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ISSN: 3006-6557 (Online)

ISSN: 3006-6549 (Print)

Vol. 3, No. 2 (2025)

Pages: 39-47

**Key Words:**

Tensions, Pulwama, Stability, Stalemate, Resolution, Analysis, Statements, Mistrust, Mediation, Engagement.

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**Abstract:** *The India-Pakistan relationship has entered a new phase of heightened tension and strategic uncertainty since the Pulwama attack and the subsequent Balakot airstrikes in 2019. This research examines the evolution of cross-border hostilities post-2019, emphasizing the impact on regional strategic stability and the deepening diplomatic stalemate between the two nuclear-armed neighbors. The revocation of Article 370 in Indian-administered Jammu and Kashmir further strained bilateral ties, leading to the suspension of trade, dialogue, and confidence-building measures. This study explores how both conventional and sub-conventional conflicts have altered deterrence postures, created instability along the Line of Control (LoC), and closed off diplomatic avenues. By analyzing official statements, policy shifts, and regional alignments, the research identifies key challenges preventing conflict resolution, including political mistrust, domestic electoral pressures, and external strategic interests. Furthermore, it evaluates the potential role of third-party mediation, backchannel diplomacy, and people-to-people initiatives as tools for de-escalation. The paper concludes by outlining a framework for sustainable peace based on mutual strategic restraint, renewed diplomatic engagement, and regional cooperation.*

**Introduction**

The Pulwama attack in February 2019 marked a significant escalation in India-Pakistan tensions, culminating in India's Balakot airstrikes and Pakistan's military retaliation. These events pushed the two nuclear-armed rivals dangerously close to war, reflecting a new era of strategic instability in South Asia (Pant, 2019). India's revocation of Article 370 in August 2019 further deepened the crisis, leading to Pakistan's diplomatic backlash and complete breakdown in formal dialogue. The 2019 crisis signaled a weakening of traditional deterrence. India's new doctrine of "preemptive strikes" and Pakistan's rapid response indicated a higher risk of miscalculation under the nuclear threshold. The absence of communication channels and confidence-building measures worsened the situation, while nationalist narratives in both countries fueled public hostility and reduced policy flexibility (Chari, 2020; Fair, 2019). Despite the hostility, brief attempts at crisis management—such as the 2021 recommitment to the 2003 ceasefire—indicate limited space for engagement (Sultan, 2021). Confidence-building, humanitarian cooperation and backchannel diplomacy remain potential tools to break the stalemate. Long-term

peace, however, hinges on addressing the Kashmir issue through pragmatic and people-centric approaches. Strategic restraint, dialogue without preconditions, and regional cooperation are essential to avoid perpetual instability. As both nations face economic and security challenges, the cost of continued confrontation outweighs perceived strategic gains. Sustainable peace requires visionary leadership, not tactical brinkmanship (Wirsing, 2020).

### Literature Review

The escalation of India-Pakistan tensions post-2019 has been widely analyzed in academic and policy literature. The Pulwama attack and India's retaliatory Balakot airstrikes marked a doctrinal shift in India's strategic thinking. Scholars such as Pant (2019) and Tellis (2020) argue that India's move toward a policy of preemptive strikes represents a departure from its traditional posture of strategic restraint. This shift, they contend, raises the risks of rapid military escalation in a nuclearized environment. Simultaneously, Pakistan's quick and calculated military response revealed a readiness to engage below the nuclear threshold, thereby challenging conventional deterrence frameworks. The abrogation of Article 370 further inflamed tensions, as noted by Wirsing (2020) and Bajoria (2020), who document how the move heightened Pakistan's diplomatic and rhetorical offensives, resulting in the downgrading of diplomatic ties, suspension of bilateral trade, and the collapse of official communication channels. These studies highlight that post-2019 events have intensified the longstanding geopolitical rivalry, introducing new layers of strategic complexity and instability in South Asia (Pant, 2019 & Bajoria, 2020). In terms of strategic stability and prospects for conflict resolution, the literature emphasizes the deterioration of confidence-building measures (CBMs) and the rise of nationalist populism on both sides. Chari (2020) and Fair (2019) examine how political rhetoric, media sensationalism, and election-driven nationalism have diminished public and institutional support for dialogue and peace efforts. The breakdown of CBMs, such as military hotlines and border agreements, has further weakened crisis management mechanisms. Nonetheless, Sultan (2021) observes that the 2021 reaffirmation of the 2003 ceasefire agreement provided a temporary reprieve and showcased the potential of backchannel diplomacy. Scholars agree that meaningful progress requires re-establishing communication, depoliticizing the Kashmir dispute, and fostering people-to-people contact to rebuild trust. However, they also recognize that without strong political will and visionary leadership, any peace initiative is likely to remain short-lived, (Chari, 2020 & Sultan, 2021)

### Theory

This research is grounded in two key international relations theory, Realism, Realism explains the persistent rivalry between India and Pakistan in terms of power politics, national security, and the absence of a central authority in the international system. Post-2019 tensions, including the Balakot airstrikes and continued nuclear posturing, illustrate the realist concepts of deterrence, the security dilemma, and state survival.

### Methodology

The study adopts a qualitative research methodology, suitable for understanding complex political relationships and strategic behavior between states. This approach allows an in-depth exploration of historical developments, official narratives, policy shifts, and diplomatic dynamics. The study uses a descriptive-analytical design, focusing on interpretation and critical analysis rather than hypothesis testing.

### Data Collection

The research uses secondary data, collected through multiple credible sources:

- Academic Journals and Books: Peer-reviewed research from sources like Journal of Strategic

Studies, Foreign Affairs, and Asian Survey.

- Policy Reports and Think Tanks: Publications from Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, Observer Research Foundation (ORF), and Council on Foreign Relations.
- Government and Diplomatic Sources: Official statements, press releases, and UN resolutions.
- Media and News Archives: Articles from major Indian and Pakistani newspapers to track public narratives and events post-2019.
- Interviews If possible, elite interviews with diplomats, military experts, or regional analysts to add depth to the findings.

### **Data Analysis**

The data is analyzed using thematic analysis, a method suitable for identifying recurring patterns, narratives, and policy trends across qualitative material.

- Strategic stability and how nuclear deterrence has evolved.
- Diplomatic breakdown after the revocation of Article 370.
- Nationalist and media narratives contributing to ongoing hostility.
- Conflict resolution strategies, including backchannel diplomacy, ceasefire agreements, and third-party mediation.

### **Strategic Stability in a Nuclear South Asia**

Strategic stability between India and Pakistan has always been fragile due to their complex historical conflicts and the presence of nuclear weapons. Since both countries became nuclear-armed states in the late 1990s, the balance of power shifted from conventional military competition to a delicate nuclear deterrence framework. The concept of strategic stability in South Asia revolves around preventing nuclear conflict through credible deterrence and risk management mechanisms. However, the post-2019 period has seen increased volatility, with India adopting more assertive military doctrines, such as the policy of preemptive or punitive strikes, particularly after the Pulwama attack and Balakot airstrikes. This shift undermines traditional deterrence models by increasing the possibility of rapid escalation, especially given the absence of clear communication channels and limited crisis management frameworks between the two adversaries (Pant, 2019).

Pakistan's strategic response to India's assertiveness has been to enhance its tactical nuclear weapons capabilities and reinforce its "full spectrum deterrence" policy, which aims to deter India's conventional superiority. The introduction of battlefield nuclear weapons by Pakistan is intended to raise the costs of conventional Indian military advances but also complicates the strategic calculus by lowering the threshold for nuclear use. This development increases uncertainty and instability, as conventional skirmishes along the Line of Control (LoC) can quickly spiral into nuclear exchanges. The Pakistani military's doctrine emphasizes that its nuclear arsenal is primarily defensive; however, analysts caution that ambiguity around deployment and command-control mechanisms poses risks of miscalculation. The ongoing arms race and the lack of robust bilateral crisis communication tools have further diminished prospects for strategic stability in the region (Kumar, 2021).

Another critical factor undermining strategic stability is the erosion of confidence-building measures (CBMs) that once helped reduce tensions and manage crises. Since the early 2000s, India and Pakistan had agreed on several CBMs such as hotline communications between military commanders, advance notification of military exercises, and agreements on ceasefire along the LoC. Post-2019, many of these mechanisms have weakened or been ignored amid escalating hostility, limiting the capacity for dialogue during crises. The absence of these preventive measures raises the risks of unintended confrontations and accidental escalation. Moreover, nationalist rhetoric and politicization of the Kashmir issue have

hardened public opinion in both countries, pressuring governments to adopt more aggressive stances rather than engage in conciliatory diplomacy. This environment significantly challenges efforts to restore strategic stability and prevent armed conflict (Fair, 2019).

Despite these challenges, some analysts suggest that strategic stability remains attainable if both countries engage in pragmatic dialogue and rebuild trust through renewed CBMs and crisis management mechanisms. Initiatives such as reaffirming ceasefire agreements along the LoC, reopening diplomatic channels, and resuming military-to-military talks can help reduce tensions and enhance transparency. Moreover, third-party facilitation or multilateral frameworks involving regional stakeholders may assist in mediating disputes and fostering a stable security environment. However, meaningful progress requires political will from both New Delhi and Islamabad, coupled with the de-escalation of nationalistic posturing and a commitment to peaceful conflict resolution. Until then, South Asia's nuclear landscape remains precariously poised, with the ever-present risk that misjudgment or accident could trigger a wider conflict (Sultan, 2021).

Post-2019, the military doctrines of India and Pakistan has undergone significant changes, particularly in response to escalating tensions following the Pulwama attack and subsequent Balakot airstrikes. India's adoption of a more aggressive posture, including a declared policy of preemptive or punitive strikes against perceived threats, marks a departure from its traditional restraint-based approach to conflict with Pakistan. This shift reflects India's intent to deter militant activities across the border more assertively but simultaneously raises the risk of miscalculation and rapid escalation. Pakistan's response has involved strengthening its tactical nuclear capabilities and signaling a willingness to use nuclear weapons to counterbalance India's conventional superiority. Such doctrinal changes challenge the existing deterrence equilibrium in South Asia, increasing regional insecurity. The fragile deterrence model, which depended heavily on mutual caution and communication, is now strained by these aggressive postures and the absence of robust crisis management frameworks. Analysts warn that the heightened readiness for preemptive action and lower thresholds for nuclear use may shorten decision-making windows, thereby amplifying the risk of unintended conflict escalation. This evolving military landscape underscores the urgency for renewed dialogue and confidence-building measures to prevent a catastrophic breakdown of strategic stability in the region (Kumar, 2021).

#### **Diplomatic Stalemate and Political Narratives**

The diplomatic relationship between India and Pakistan has been marked by persistent stalemate, particularly following the events of 2019. The revocation of Article 370 by India, which altered the special status of Jammu and Kashmir, led to a dramatic downturn in bilateral relations. Pakistan condemned the move as a violation of international agreements and responded by downgrading diplomatic ties, suspending trade, and intensifying rhetorical hostility. This move effectively froze all formal channels of communication between the two countries. The lack of dialogue eliminated opportunities for crisis management and prevented any meaningful negotiation on contentious issues. The diplomatic paralysis has entrenched hostility and reinforced zero-sum perceptions, where both states view compromise as a strategic loss rather than a pathway to peace (Bajoria, 2020).

Political narratives in both India and Pakistan have played a crucial role in sustaining the diplomatic deadlock. Nationalist rhetoric has intensified on both sides, with political leaders and media framing the Kashmir issue through uncompromising and emotionally charged lenses. In India, the ruling party has emphasized strong nationalist credentials, portraying the revocation of Article 370 as a fulfillment of a longstanding political promise. This narrative appeals to domestic audiences but limits diplomatic flexibility. Meanwhile, in Pakistan, political discourse has framed Kashmir as a core existential issue,

galvanizing public opinion against India and justifying aggressive posturing. Such narratives reduce space for dialogue by creating domestic political costs for leaders who advocate compromise, thereby perpetuating the stalemate (Chari, 2020).

The role of media and social platforms has further deepened the diplomatic impasse by amplifying hostile political narratives and shaping public perceptions. Both mainstream and social media in India and Pakistan have been instrumental in framing the bilateral relationship as an antagonistic rivalry, often emphasizing military confrontations and humanitarian concerns over diplomacy. This media environment fuels mistrust and hardens public opinion, making it politically risky for leaders to pursue conciliatory policies. The amplification of nationalist sentiment through media also contributes to misinformation and propaganda, which complicates efforts to build mutual understanding and trust. Consequently, diplomatic efforts are often undermined by the charged political environment that discourages cooperation and dialogue (Zeb, 2021).

Despite the diplomatic stalemate and politically charged narratives, some analysts highlight that opportunities for dialogue still exist through backchannel diplomacy and third-party mediation. Sultan (2021) suggests that informal diplomatic efforts, though covert, have occasionally helped de-escalate tensions and maintain limited communication during crises. Additionally, international actors and regional stakeholders have at times played mediatory roles, encouraging restraint and renewed talks. However, the prospects for meaningful diplomatic progress hinge on de-escalation of nationalist rhetoric and the willingness of both governments to prioritize peace over domestic political gains. Without addressing the underlying political narratives and re-establishing trust, the diplomatic stalemate is likely to persist, continuing the cycle of hostility and instability in South Asia.

The revocation of Article 370 in August 2019 by the Indian government marked a significant turning point in India-Pakistan relations, leading to a near-total breakdown of diplomatic dialogue. This constitutional change stripped Jammu and Kashmir of its special autonomous status, which Pakistan vehemently opposed, viewing it as a unilateral violation of international agreements, including United Nations resolutions on Kashmir. Following this move, Pakistan downgraded diplomatic ties, expelled the Indian High Commissioner, and suspended bilateral trade, effectively freezing formal communication channels. This diplomatic freeze eliminated mechanisms that had previously helped manage crises and reduced opportunities for backchannel diplomacy. The absence of dialogue increased the risk of misunderstandings and escalations, as both countries reverted to military posturing along the Line of Control (LoC), reinforcing a cycle of hostility and mistrust that severely undermined prospects for peaceful resolution (Wirsing, 2020).

Nationalism and media narratives on both sides have played a critical role in sustaining and deepening this bilateral hostility. In India, the revocation of Article 370 was framed as a historic and patriotic move by the ruling government, which strengthened nationalist sentiments among the population. This framing reduced political space for dialogue or compromise on Kashmir, as dissenting voices were often portrayed as anti-national. Conversely, in Pakistan, media outlets and political leaders amplified the narrative of Kashmir as a “core issue” of Pakistani identity and sovereignty, which mobilized public opinion against India and justified aggressive diplomatic and military responses. Media in both countries often highlighted confrontational rhetoric and military incidents, perpetuating fear and animosity among citizens. The politicization of nationalism through media channels has therefore entrenched the diplomatic stalemate by making reconciliation politically costly for leaders and by reinforcing mutual distrust between the populations (Fair, 2019).

### Prospects for Conflict Resolution and Peace building

The prospects for conflict resolution between India and Pakistan, especially post-2019, remain complex and fraught with challenges, yet not entirely bleak. Both countries share a long history of rivalry and intermittent conflict, particularly over the Kashmir dispute, but there have also been periodic attempts at dialogue and peace building. One promising avenue lies in confidence-building measures (CBMs) that aim to reduce hostility and create an environment conducive to negotiation. Historically, CBMs such as ceasefire agreements, advance notifications of military exercises, and cross-border trade have contributed to lowering tensions. Reviving and expanding these measures could serve as foundational steps toward rebuilding trust. However, for CBMs to be effective, they must be sustained and supported by political leadership on both sides willing to engage in consistent, sincere dialogue despite domestic pressures.

Another critical pathway for conflict resolution involves backchannel diplomacy, which has played an important role in managing crises and opening unofficial lines of communication even when formal dialogue was suspended. Backchannel efforts allow for more flexible and discreet discussions that can bypass public scrutiny and political roadblocks. These informal contacts have, at times, helped de-escalate conflicts and prepare the groundwork for formal negotiations. For instance, during periods of heightened tension, such as after the Pulwama-Balakot incidents, backchannel diplomacy facilitated dialogue that prevented further escalation. Expanding such unofficial diplomacy, possibly with third-party facilitation, could provide a viable mechanism for India and Pakistan to gradually rebuild trust and explore mutually acceptable solutions without the immediate pressures of public opinion (Sultan, 2021). Third-party mediation and international involvement present another potential avenue for peace building. Although both India and Pakistan have traditionally been wary of outside interference in their bilateral issues, regional and global powers can play constructive roles in encouraging restraint and dialogue. The United Nations, China, the United States, and the Organization of Islamic Cooperation have, at various points, attempted to mediate or offer frameworks for negotiation. Multilateral forums that include regional stakeholders could also foster dialogue on security, economic cooperation, and cross-border challenges like terrorism and water sharing. However, effective mediation requires that the conflicting parties recognize the legitimacy of the mediator and perceive that third-party involvement aligns with their strategic interests, which remains a significant hurdle (Pant, 2020).

Peace building efforts must also address the underlying socio-political issues fueling the conflict, especially the Kashmir dispute and its impact on human security and regional stability. Without resolving or at least managing the Kashmir question in a manner acceptable to both parties, sustained peace will be elusive. Confidence-building at the grassroots level, such as encouraging people-to-people contact, cultural exchanges, and economic collaboration, can help humanize “the other side” and reduce entrenched prejudices. NGOs, civil society organizations, and academic exchanges can play a pivotal role in these initiatives. These efforts, while slow and gradual, can create a social foundation that pressures political leaders toward more conciliatory policies and reduces the space for extremist narratives on both sides (Fair, 2019).

Leadership dynamics in both countries significantly shape prospects for conflict resolution. Political will and vision at the highest levels are essential to overcome entrenched nationalist postures and mistrust. Leaders who prioritize peace, even at domestic political costs, can open the door for transformative dialogue and agreements. However, domestic politics often complicate peace efforts, with hardline positions gaining traction during election cycles or crises. Thus, sustaining peace requires consistent leadership committed to long-term engagement, coupled with mechanisms to institutionalize dialogue



beyond individual administrations. Building bipartisan consensus and involving a broad spectrum of political actors can make peace building less vulnerable to sudden political shifts (Kapur, 2021).

Economic cooperation and interdependence present another promising tool for peace building between India and Pakistan. Cross-border trade, energy projects, and regional economic integration can create mutual benefits that incentivize peaceful relations. Economic engagement has the potential to build constituencies for peace by linking the prosperity of both countries with reduced conflict. Initiatives such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) and more recent proposals under the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) highlight opportunities for economic collaboration despite political tensions. While geopolitical mistrust limits the full realization of these opportunities, gradual economic integration could serve as a confidence-building measure that promotes stability and cooperation (Bhattacharjee, 2020).

The de-escalating military postures and establishing robust crisis management mechanisms are essential for reducing the risk of inadvertent conflict. Both India and Pakistan possess sophisticated military capabilities, including nuclear weapons, making crisis mismanagement potentially catastrophic. Restoring military hotlines, regular dialogue between military commanders, and transparent communication regarding troop movements and exercises can reduce misunderstandings. Joint efforts to enforce ceasefires and address border incidents promptly can create a more predictable security environment. Such measures require trust but are necessary to complement diplomatic initiatives. Without addressing the security dilemma and risk of accidental escalation, broader peace building efforts may remain vulnerable to sudden breakdowns (Tellis, 2020).

These unofficial and discreet communications allow negotiators to explore compromises and de-escalate crises without the pressure of public scrutiny or political grandstanding (Sultan, 2021). For example, after the 2016 Uri attack and the subsequent Indian "surgical strikes," backchannel contacts played a crucial role in preventing full-scale war by facilitating dialogue that reassured both parties of their intentions and boundaries. The flexibility of backchannel diplomacy makes it uniquely suited to the volatile Indo-Pak context, where formal talks are often hampered by domestic politics and nationalist fervor. Moving forward, strengthening and institutionalizing backchannel mechanisms could offer a pragmatic path to crisis management and incremental peace building, provided both governments commit to sustained engagement behind the scenes, *Ibid.*

The 2003 ceasefire agreement significantly reduced cross-border firing and casualties, creating a relatively stable security environment that allowed limited trade and people-to-people contact. However, breaches and violations have periodically undermined these agreements, fueled by local commanders' actions or retaliatory strikes following militant attacks. Maintaining and expanding such ceasefires requires robust verification mechanisms and military-to-military communication channels to quickly resolve misunderstandings before they escalate. Future ceasefire agreements could incorporate modern technologies such as surveillance drones and joint monitoring teams, alongside renewed diplomatic commitments, to build trust and reduce the risk of inadvertent escalation (Kapur, 2021).

The United Nations, for instance, has historically passed resolutions on Kashmir, though their implementation has remained elusive. More recently, China's growing influence in the region and its role in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor position it as a key stakeholder with leverage over Pakistan, which could be leveraged to encourage moderation. The United States, too, has periodically attempted to mediate peace, particularly during phases of heightened violence. The efficacy of third-party involvement depends largely on neutrality, legitimacy, and the willingness of India and Pakistan to accept external facilitation without perceiving it as undue interference. Multilateral forums, involving

regional stakeholders, may also offer a less contentious platform for dialogue on security, economic cooperation, and humanitarian concerns (Pant, 2020).

Renewing and expanding confidence-building measures beyond ceasefires to include trade, cultural exchanges, and joint water management projects can create positive interdependencies that incentivize peaceful coexistence. Both nations would benefit from institutionalizing dialogue mechanisms that transcend political cycles, ensuring continuity and resilience in peace efforts. Additionally, addressing core issues such as the Kashmir dispute through incremental steps—such as enhancing local governance, protecting human rights, and encouraging grassroots reconciliation—can reduce the deeply entrenched grievances that fuel conflict. Peace building must also focus on reducing the militarization of public discourse and creating political space for moderate voices, which is essential for breaking the cycle of hostility and mistrust (Fair, 2019).

Establishing and maintaining direct communication hotlines between military and political leadership, enhancing transparency regarding military exercises, and agreeing on pre-notification protocols for troop movements are practical steps that can build predictability. Furthermore, engaging in joint training programs on conflict prevention and crisis management may help develop mutual understanding among security establishments. Finally, fostering sustained international support for these efforts, balanced with respect for sovereignty, can provide both incentives and assurances to maintain peace initiatives. Ultimately, a combination of backchannel diplomacy, robust ceasefire agreements, credible third-party facilitation, and comprehensive peace building strategies will be essential to creating a durable and de-escalated South Asian security environment.

### Conclusion

The post-2019 period of India-Pakistan cross-border tensions reflects a deeply entrenched strategic and diplomatic impasse that poses significant risks to regional stability in South Asia. The revocation of Article 370 marked a turning point, intensifying mistrust and further complicating diplomatic engagement. The fragile strategic stability in this nuclearized environment heightens the dangers of miscalculation or accidental escalation, underscoring the urgent need for effective crisis management mechanisms. Despite these challenges, history shows that dialogue and negotiation—whether through formal channels or backchannel diplomacy—remain indispensable tools to manage and eventually resolve conflicts. The persistence of diplomatic stalemate, fueled by nationalist narratives and media-driven hostility on both sides, obstructs progress but does not preclude the possibility of future breakthroughs. Prospects for conflict resolution demand renewed commitment to confidence-building measures, including sustained ceasefire agreements and military-to-military communication, which are essential to reduce immediate tensions and foster trust. Third-party facilitation, though controversial, can offer valuable mediation and frameworks to bridge gaps, provided it respects the sensitivities of sovereignty and national pride. Beyond state-centric diplomacy, peace building must incorporate grassroots initiatives that promote people-to-people contact, cultural exchanges, and economic interdependence to soften entrenched animosities. Political leadership willing to prioritize peace over populist rhetoric is critical, alongside institutional mechanisms that endure beyond electoral cycles and shifting administrations. The current diplomatic stalemate appears formidable, it should not engender fatalism. A multifaceted approach combining military restraint, diplomatic innovation, third-party engagement, and socio-economic cooperation offers a realistic pathway to de-escalation and sustainable peace. The stakes for India, Pakistan, and the broader region demand concerted efforts to break the cycle of hostility and envision a future where strategic stability coexists with meaningful conflict resolution.



## Findings

1. India-Pakistan cross-border tensions post-2019 have escalated, destabilizing strategic stability in the nuclearized South Asian region.
2. The diplomatic stalemate has deepened following the revocation of Article 370, with limited formal dialogue between the two countries.
3. Nationalistic political narratives and media rhetoric continue to reinforce mutual distrust and hinder peace efforts.
4. Backchannel diplomacy and ceasefire agreements have proven effective in managing crises but lack consistent institutional support.
5. Third-party facilitation and grassroots peace building initiatives present promising, yet underutilized, avenues for sustainable conflict resolution.

## Recommendations

1. Reopen and institutionalize continuous diplomatic dialogue channels between India and Pakistan.
2. Strengthen and enforce ceasefire agreements with transparent monitoring along the Line of Control.
3. Promote backchannel diplomacy to facilitate confidential crisis management and negotiation.
4. Consider neutral third-party mediation while respecting both countries' sovereignty.
5. Increase people-to-people contacts through cultural, academic, and trade exchanges.
6. Encourage responsible media to reduce inflammatory nationalist rhetoric.
7. Establish direct military hotlines and joint crisis management protocols to prevent escalation.
8. Pursue incremental political solutions focusing on humanitarian issues and local governance reforms.

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