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The Role of Major Powers in Managing Conflict in Kashmir: A Comparative Assessment

M. Jashim UDDIN*

Abstract

The Kashmir conflict has been a grave concern for regional and international peace and security by provoking cross-border terrorism and nuclear proliferation, two key global issues. In the meantime, it has become more and more evident that without the help of the international community India and Pakistan alone cannot solve the conflict. This article argues that the Kashmir conflict needs to be mediated by an impartial third-party major power with the ability to exert leverage on and provide incentives for both India and Pakistan. But it is also important to consider who could best fulfill the criteria for such a role. For this reason, this study also attempts to research the roles and potential of four major powers — namely the U.S., Russia, China, and Japan — in South Asian conflict management. Based on the comparison the study concludes that Japan is in the strongest position to mediate the Kashmir dispute.

Keywords : South Asia, Kashmir Conflict, Conflict Management, Third Party Mediation, Major Power, Impartiality, Leverage, and Incentives

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1. Introduction

The deep-rooted historic rivalry between India and Pakistan over Kashmir has been a long-running concern for international peace and security since the independence of these two countries in 1947. In the last half a century, Pakistan and India have fought three full-scale wars, a mini war in Kargil in 1999, and also prepared for a destructive war (possibly nuclear) in 2002 over Kashmir. Today, the conflict overlaps with other security issues: ethnic conflict, cross-border terrorism, human rights violations, and nuclear proliferation in South Asia. Nevertheless, India and Pakistan have failed to resolve the dispute. Although the ongoing peace process is encouraging, there is a fear that at any time this peaceful environment could turn tense, as has occurred in the past. Related to this, Stephen P. Cohen of the Brookings Institution notes that the peace effort is not likely to go very far because sooner or later something will disrupt the relationship.¹⁾ On the other hand, due to Indian opposition, the United Nations has failed to implement its resolution for a plebiscite in Kashmir. At the same time, it is also observed that neither mere diplomatic pressure by the international community nor military intervention can bring a realistic end to the conflict, since both countries possess nuclear weapons. Therefore, this study argues that the Kashmir dispute needs to be mediated by an impartial third-party major power, which has leverage on both India and Pakistan. But it is also important to consider who could best fulfill the criteria for such a role. To seek an answer to the above question, this study attempts to focus on a comparative analysis of the role of four major powers in managing the South Asian conflict, namely the U.S., Russia, China, and Japan.

2. Criteria for an Effective Mediator

Conflict management scholars emphasize the importance of the role of third party mediation in managing conflict when two adversaries fail to resolve a conflict by themselves.²⁾ There are various actors involved in mediation: states, the UN, regional

1) R.K. Radhakrishnan, "India's Peace offer to Pak may not go far, says Cohen," *The Hindu*, October 28, 2003.

2) Jacob Bercovitch, ed., *Resolving International Conflicts: The Theory and Practice of Mediation* (London: Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc, 1996).

organizations, NGOs and individuals. However, individual mediators and NGOs lack the requisite leverage for effective mediation. On the other hand, due to the involvement of so many states, the UN and regional organizations often complicate the decision making process for conflict resolution. Hence, a state, particularly a major power that has impartiality and leverage, is ideally suited to mediate a conflict more effectively.

There is a debate on the importance of *impartiality* and *leverage* as the most important criteria when choosing a mediator. Berridge argued that the third party must be substantially *impartial* in the dispute, at least once the negotiation has started, and the issue is actually on the agenda.³⁾ Young noted that in most cases a meaningful role for a third party mediator will depend on the party's impartiality in the conflict.⁴⁾ If an intervening party is perceived as partial to one side or other, it loses its status as a true third party. However, Zartman and Touval argued that the mediation process succeeds not merely when a mediator is unbiased or impartial, but when he or she possesses resources and leverage that either disputant values. Thus for them leverage is more important than impartiality for effective mediation.⁵⁾ The author considers that the most important factor is a mediator's impartiality. A third party that has ability in other respects but lacks impartiality should probably not be the first or best choice. If an actor meets both requirements, it can be an even more effective mediator in managing a conflict.

3. The Role of Major Powers in Managing the Conflict between India and Pakistan over Kashmir

South Asia has been considered an important region for its significant geo-political location. In addition, the 9/11, terrorist attack and subsequent "War Against Terrorism" have made this region even more important for the international community. All major powers have been involved in the region as a result of their respective political, economic and strategic interests. However, this section attempts to

3) G.R. Berridge, *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*, Second Edition (New York: Palgrave, 2002), p. 188.

4) Oran Young, *The Intermediaries: Third Parties in International Crisis* (New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1967), p. 81.

5) I. William Zartman and Saadia Touval, "International Mediation in the Post-Cold War Era," in Chester A. Crocker & Fen Osler Hampson with Pamela Aall, eds., *Managing Global Chaos: Sources of and Responses to International Conflict* (Washington D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997), pp. 445-451.

focus on the role of non-regional actors, especially four major powers — the U.S., Russia, China, and Japan — in South Asian conflict management.

U.S. Policy Toward South Asia: Changing Strategy lacks Credibility

The U.S. has influenced South Asian political and security affairs since the early stages of the Cold War. It has played an assertive role particularly in restraining India and Pakistan from launching a war over Kashmir several times in the last fifteen years.⁶⁾ However, all these efforts were short-term crisis management. The U.S. has failed to bring any permanent solution to the conflict. From another point of view, too, U.S. policy towards South Asia lacks credibility. Part of this reason for this is that the U.S. has changed its strategy and priorities several times based on its national interests. During the Cold War, Pakistan became an ally of the United States. Due to India's close relationship with the Soviet Union, the U.S. and Pakistan signed a defense treaty in 1954 to contain Soviet influence in this region. During the Indo-Pakistan war in 1965 and Bangladeshi independence war in 1971, the U.S. supported its ally Pakistan. Following Soviet intervention in Afghanistan in December 1979, the U.S. promoted its economic and military relationships with Pakistan to aid the forces (Mujahidin) against Soviet occupation in Afghanistan.

However, after the end of the Cold War, the U.S. began to alienate Pakistan, and tilt toward India as Washington and New Delhi turned from the 'estranged democracies' of the Cold War to 'engaged democracies.'⁷⁾ Various actions by the U.S. revealed the priority it now gave to India. *First*, the U.S. promoted economic, political and military relationship with India. *Second*, the U.S. asked Pakistan to respect the Line of Control (LOC) that was more favorable to India. During the Kargil crisis in 1999, the U.S. was critical of Pakistan and called for an urgent end to the Kargil conflict by restoring the LOC.⁸⁾ *Third*, India became the largest recipient in South Asia of U.S. development and food aid. U.S. assistance to India in FY 2000 reached a total of \$170 million, more than

6) Stephen Cohen, "The US and South Asia," *The Brookings Institution*, January 2005, available at: <http://www.brookings.edu/views/articles/cohens/20050101.pdf> (accessed on May 10, 2006).

7) Kanti Bajpai and Amitabh Matto, eds., *Engaged Democracies: India-US Relations in the 21st Century* (New Delhi: Har-Anand Publication Pvt. Ltd., 2000).

8) Howard B. Schaffer, "Reconsidering the U.S. Role," *The Washington Quarterly* (Spring 2001), Vol. 24, p. 202.

45 times that to Pakistan (only \$3.78 million),⁹⁾ whereas Pakistan had received \$600 million annually in the 1980s.¹⁰⁾

Following 9/11, the U.S. foreign policy towards South Asia has again undergone a fundamental change.¹¹⁾ The U.S. has rebuilt the alliance relationship with Pakistan. According to Teresita C. Schaffer, "The attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon turned U.S. South Asia policy temporarily upside down, bringing Pakistan to center stage and putting parts of the U.S.-India agenda on hold."¹²⁾ Both India and Pakistan offered their full cooperation for the war against terrorism. However, for strategic reasons the U.S. had to give priority to Pakistan's indispensable support for the war in Afghanistan. The U.S. has supported Pakistan with a great amount of economic aid for political, economic, and education reform in Pakistan since it joined the war against terrorism.¹³⁾ Pakistan was also given the status of non-NATO ally of the United States for its cooperation in the war against Terrorism.¹⁴⁾

Nevertheless, the U.S. has been careful not to allow the new U.S.-Pakistan alliance to harm the U.S.-India relationship. In 2004, the U.S. government reiterated its commitment to the Indian government to increase Indian access to American high technology, nuclear power, and missile defense.¹⁵⁾ However, even though the U.S. is committed to supporting India, New Delhi has remained deeply concerned about the Bush administration's increased links to Pakistan, particularly U.S. plans for renewed sales of F-16 fighter aircraft to Islamabad. The Bush administration seems seriously committed to improving its relationship with India. Nuclear cooperation between India and the U.S., announced in a Joint Statement on July 18, 2005, is the latest development in the U.S.-India relationship. President Bush agreed to give India virtual membership in the club of recognized nuclear-weapons states created by the Nuclear

9) Thomas Lum, *U.S. Foreign Aid to East and South Asia: Selected Recipients*, Congressional Research Service (CRS) Report for Congress, April 2002. Available at: <http://www.iwar.org.uk/news-archive/crs/9661.pdf> (accessed on May 20, 2005).

10) Zhang Guihong, "U.S. Security Policy Toward South Asia after September 11th and Its Implication for China: A Chinese Perspective," *Occasional Paper*, (Henry L. Stimson Center, January 2003) No. 50, p. 3.

11) C. Raja Mohan, "A Paradigm Shift Toward South Asia?," *The Washington Quarterly* (Winter 2002-03), Vol. 26, p. 141.

12) Teresita C. Schaffer, "The U.S. and South Asia: New Priorities, Familiar Interests," *Global Beat Issue Brief*, No. 66, available at: www.nyu.edu/globalbeat/pubs/ib66.htm (accessed on June 20, 2005).

13) Zhang Guihong, *op. cit.*, p. 11.

14) Anwar Iqbal, "Non-NATO Status for Pakistan Approved," *Dawn*, June 3, 2004.

15) Jonathan D. Pollack, "The United States and Asia in 2004," *Asian Survey* (January/ February 2005), Vol. XLV, p. 10.

Nonproliferation Treaty.¹⁶⁾ Pakistan has become concerned about the warm U.S.-India relationship and India's attempts to get equal treatment from the U.S. It seems to the author that current U.S. policy in South Asia is reasonably well-balanced. But both India and Pakistan have their doubts about U.S. policy in this region.

It is well known that Pakistan has always encouraged third party mediation for the termination of the Kashmir dispute while India opposes it. After 9/11 when the U.S. and Pakistan began to rebuild relations, Pakistan requested the U.S. to mediate the conflict. Due to the Pakistani request the U.S. expressed its desire to mediate the Kashmir dispute in 2001. However, India rejected any third party mediation of the conflict.¹⁷⁾ Considering its relationship with India, the U.S. has encouraged both countries to resolve the dispute through a bilateral peace process. Concerning the settlement of the dispute, Ryan Crocker, the incumbent U.S. Ambassador to Pakistan, noted that the U.S. can be helpful in advancing the ongoing peace process for the settlement of the Kashmir dispute, but will not get involved in the middle of it to mediate a solution.¹⁸⁾

Russian Policy Toward South Asia: India is the Corner Stone

Because of the geographical proximity of South Asia, the Soviet Union viewed the region as strategically important for its security. During the Cold War period the objectives of the foreign policy of the Soviet Union in South Asia were to contain the U.S. and Chinese influence in this region. The Soviet Union built up a strong military relationship with India to implement her goals.¹⁹⁾ In the post Cold War period, Russia has also maintained a good relationship with its long-term ally, India. Defense relations have been at the center of their relationship. New Delhi has bought some \$33 billion worth of weapons from Moscow since the 1960s.²⁰⁾ India is the only country with which Russia conducts a long-term program of military industrial cooperation. Moscow and New Delhi on January 20, 2004, signed a \$1.6 billion deal finalizing India's

16) Strobe Talbott, "Good Day for India but Bad day for Non-Proliferation," *Yale Global*, July 21, 2005. Available at: http://yaleglobal.yale.edu/display_article?id=6042 (accessed on October 20, 2005); Also see, "India, US Sign 10-year Pact to Expand Defense Ties," *Hindustan Times*, June 29, 2005.

17) "India Rejects U.S. Mediation with tie Pakistan" *Dawn*, October 15, 2001.

18) Nasir Jamal, "Ambassadors Rules out US Mediation on Kashmir," *Dawn*, December 10, 2004.

19) Linda Racioppi, *Soviet Policy Towards South Asia Since 1970* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

20) Sergei Blagov, "Arming Asia: Russia's \$5 billion forte," *Asia Times*, January 21, 2004.

purchase of Russian aircraft. Analysts believe that Russia will continue to be India's main arms supplier as it cannot find as lucrative and as big a market as India for its defense production.²¹⁾ At the same time, another goal of Russia's South Asian policy is to create a Russia-India-China triangular alliance against the U.S. and its allies.²²⁾

Meanwhile, the relationship between Russia and Pakistan is not friendly. There have been some attempts to improve relations between Moscow and Islamabad recently, but the results are modest so far.²³⁾ Russia wants to establish a balanced relationship with Pakistan especially to combat Islamic terrorism in South Asia and Central Asia as Russia views itself as a victim of Islamic terrorism in Chechnya. The Russian Foreign Ministry believes that Pakistan explicitly permits international terrorists to conduct operations against India from its territory. On December 4, 2002, while in India, Russian President Vladimir Putin called upon Pakistan to destroy the terrorist infrastructure serving separatist operations in Kashmir. However, Pakistan rejected Putin's statement and asked Russia to do more about the genocide, human rights violations, and rapes committed by the Indian Army in Kashmir.²⁴⁾

Moscow's position on the Kashmir conflict has not changed since the Soviet period. Russia regards Kashmir as a part of India. It sees Pakistan as supporting terrorism and obstructing any solution to the Kashmir conflict. Therefore, from a Pakistani perspective, Russia cannot be an impartial third party to mediate the Kashmir conflict.

Chinese Policy Toward South Asia: An All-weather Friendship with Pakistan

Although China is a big factor in South Asian security affairs, for China, South Asia has long assumed somewhat greater importance, but by no means equal to that of East Asia.²⁵⁾ However, China has maintained a special relationship with Pakistan. China's leading English daily the *People's Daily* notes that Sino-Pakistan relations have been tested through history and are neither fettered by ideology nor influenced by the changing international situation.²⁶⁾ According to Ziad Haider, "China and Pakistan have

21) Tara Shankar Sahay, "Russia trips on Indian Defense Ties," *Asia Times*, October 26, 2005.

22) Martin Malek, "Russian Policy towards South Asia," *Asian Survey* (May/June 2004) Vol. XLIV, p. 387.

23) *Ibid.*, pp. 391-396.

24) Memorandum of the Foreign Ministry of Pakistan to the Russian Ambassador quoted in B. Muralidhar Reddy, "Pak. Resents Putin's Remarks," *The Hindu* (Madras), December 2, 2002.

25) Robert A. Scalapino, "US-PRC Relations and South Asia," in Zillur Rahman, ed., *SAARC and Super Power* (Dhaka: University Press Limited, 1991) p. 22.

26) "Boost all weather Partnership between China and Pakistan," *People's Daily*, April 5, 2005.

maintained an "all-weather" friendship based on their mutual interests in protecting their borders against, and checking the influence of their rival neighbor India.²⁷⁾ The issue of defense is at the core of China-Pakistan relations. Over the years China has provided Pakistan with a wide range of major conventional weapons systems and helped it to build nuclear weapons. Pakistan relies on China as a trusted ally in dealing with India from a position of military weakness.

However, while maintaining a special relationship with Pakistan, China has recently adopted a more balanced approach to India. Although India always indicates that Chinese military and nuclear weapons are a threat to India,²⁸⁾ China is very reluctant to reveal that India or Indian nuclear weapons are a concern for China. In Chinese strategic calculations India is not as big a factor as the U.S. or Japan in the Asia Pacific region, and China has thus not considered India a rival. Zhu Feng, a Chinese scholar at Beijing University, notes that during the Cold War Period, the United States and China were hostile to India and friendly to Pakistan. Since the end of the Cold War, China has maintained friendly relations with Pakistan, and at the same time, has taken a more unbiased approach to India.²⁹⁾ Although the economic relationship between the two countries is improving,³⁰⁾ the Sino-Pakistani security and strategic nexus has remained a central issue in Sino-India relations ever since Pakistan and China signed a historic border agreement in March 1963, ceding a section of territory in Pakistan-controlled Kashmir to China.³¹⁾ At the same time, from an Indian perspective, growing Chinese presence in Burma and its strategic relationships with the other small countries in South Asia are some reasons for India's suspicions of China's intentions in the region.³²⁾

27) Ziad Haider, "Sino-Pakistan relations and Xinjiang's Uighurs: Politics, Trade, and Islam along the Karakoram Highway," *Asian Survey* (July/August 2005) Vol. XLV, p. 522.

28) After the nuclear tests, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee sent a letter to the U.S. President William J. Clinton that implied India conducted the tests to safeguard its security from Pakistan, and particularly from China. See, "Indian Letter to Clinton on Nuclear Teststing," *New York Times*, May 13, 1998, available at:

<http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/indlet.htm> (accessed on May 25, 2006).

29) Tim Luard, "China Keeps Pakistan Guessing," *BBC News*, November 4, 2003.

30) The trade volume between China and India hit new highs in 2004, reaching 13.6 billion. See, "Full Text of Joint Statement of China, India," *People's Daily*, April 13, 2005.

31) Allen S. Whiting, "The Future of Chinese Foreign Policy," in Samuel S. Kim, ed., *China and the World: Chinese Foreign relations in the post Cold War Era* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1994), p. 264.

32) Cited in Rahul Bedi, "India and China: Neighborhood Problems," *Asia Times*, June 17, 2003.

China's declared positions on the Kashmir issue have evolved through four distinct phases. In the 1950s, Beijing upheld a more or less neutral position on the Kashmir issue. The 1960s and 1970s saw China shifted its position toward public support of Pakistan's views on the issue as Sino-Indian relations deteriorated. Since the early 1980s, however, with China and India moving toward normalization of bilateral relations, Beijing returned to a position of neutrality even as it sought a balance between the need to satisfy Pakistan's demands for support and the growing interest in developing a better relationship with India. By the early 1990s, China's position became unequivocal: that the Kashmir issue is a bilateral matter to be solved by India and Pakistan through peaceful means.³³⁾ However, from the Indian point of view China is one of the parties of the Kashmir dispute. China controls Aksai Chin, twenty percent of the whole of Kashmir. Nick Easen of CNN notes that although at present China is officially remaining impartial it has vested interests in Kashmir.³⁴⁾ China realizes that being a part of the dispute and having special relations with Pakistan limits its scope for managing the dispute. Also the primary concern for India is China's military support to Pakistan. India wants China to abandon its nuclear and missile technology transfers to Pakistan. As India sees it, Pakistan is unlikely to develop their nuclear program without Chinese help. India has no choice but to see China as an indirect cause of Pakistan's military ambitions. Considering the relationship between India and China, it can be argued that China also does not meet the criteria to be a third party mediator to manage the Kashmir conflict.

Japan's Policy Toward South Asia: Impartial in the Indo-Pakistan Conflict

Japan and South Asia have historical and cultural links which go back two millennia. During the early 20th century, Japan helped South Asian in their fight for independence from the British.³⁵⁾ Due to historical links and sympathy Japan has maintained friendly relationships with all South Asian countries since their independence. In addition, it has been the largest donor to most of the South Asian

33) John W. Garver, "China's Kashmir Policies," *India Review* (January 2004), pp. 1-24.

34) Nick Easen, "Aksai Chin: China's Disputed Slice of Kashmir," *CNN.com*, May 24, 2002.

35) Narashima Murthy, *India and Japan: Dimensions of their Relations* (New Delhi: ABC Publishing House, 1986), pp. 85-98.

countries for years.³⁶⁾ In the post-Cold War period and especially since 9/11 Japan has promoted its South Asia policy. Japanese government and NGOs have been deeply involved in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. At the same time, in the last few years frequent high profile visits between India and Japan, and between Pakistan and Japan have demonstrated the increased mutual interests of Japan and the South Asian countries.³⁷⁾ In the new century, the main objectives of Japan's policy goals in India and Pakistan have been 1) economic development and the promotion of trade and business, particularly with India; 2) promoting democratization and socio-economic development in Pakistan; 3) combating terrorism 4) reducing nuclear risk and aiming for an eventual reverse of the nuclear build-up; 5) promoting inter-state relations through regional cooperation.³⁸⁾ However, in reality Japan lacks a diplomatic strategy to implement its goals particularly in the political and security fields in South Asia.

India and Pakistan have been the largest recipients of Japanese ODA in South Asia. In the year 2002 Japan provided \$1.2 billion to South West Asia (South Asia), of which the major portion went to India and Pakistan.³⁹⁾ Japan has been playing a significant role in the development of these countries through a number of ODA projects involved in building infrastructure, eliminating poverty, and promoting health and education and the like.

Although the economic role of Japan in India and Pakistan has been significant, it has been reluctant to play an active role in the India-Pakistan conflict. In fact, it has always tried to be impartial in the Indo-Pakistan quarrel over Kashmir. Some prominent scholars have noted that since the early days of the Cold War when all the major powers have been involved in the contention for power and position in South Asia, Japan was the only exception, which has never sided with any country in the

36) Savitri Vishwanathan, "Japan's ODA with Nations in South Asia," in K.V. Kesavan and Lalima Verma, eds., *Japan-South Asia: Security and Economic Perspectives* (New Delhi: Lancers Books, 2000), p. 147; Also see *ODA White Paper 2003*, available at: http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/oda/white/2003/part4_2.html (accessed on May10, 2006).

37) Interview with Yukio Saita, the Deputy Director of the South-West Asian Division of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, on December 13, 2005.

38) Interview with Yukio Saita, *Ibid*; See also, "Chapter Two: Regional Diplomacy," *Diplomatic Bluebook 2004*, available at: <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/other/bluebook/2004/chap2-a.pdf> (accessed on May 10, 2006).

39) *Japan's ODA White Paper 2003*, *op. cit.*

regional conflict in South Asia.⁴⁰⁾

In fact, Japan has been reluctant to be involved in any international conflicts since World War II. Why is this so? Possible answers are: 1) Japan's lack of interest in competing with any other developed nations for leadership; 2) the priority Japan gives to its economic role rather than to any political role in promoting peace and security⁴¹⁾; 3) Japan's historical conflict with her neighbors, and the reaction of Japan's neighbors to any larger political and military role for Japan⁴²⁾; and 4) lack of an independent Japanese strategy or diplomatic leadership.⁴³⁾ Nevertheless, Japan has gradually tried to promote its political role since the end of the cold war.⁴⁴⁾ Japan reformed its ODA charter in 1992 and once again in 2003 to make it possible to use its ODA as diplomatic and economic leverage in international peace and security. It has been recognized for its major peacemaking role in Cambodia from 1997 to 1998 and for a vital role in the Sri Lankan peace process for the last several years.⁴⁵⁾ Japan has been seeking permanent membership in the UNSC to enable it to play a more active political role in global peace and security.

As a part of its global efforts for non-nuclear proliferation, Japan has urged both India and Pakistan to cooperate with the international community on the issues of the NPT and CTBT. Nevertheless, India and Pakistan conducted nuclear tests in May 1998. Despite its position as the top bilateral donor there was no advance notice to the Japanese government about the tests.⁴⁶⁾ These tests came as a great shock to the Japanese people and to the foreign ministry. In reaction, Japan imposed economic sanctions on both India and Pakistan and asked both countries to reverse these developments. However, Japanese ODA diplomacy proved to be ineffective in this

40) See, "Introduction" in Robert A. Sealapino, Seizaburo Sato, Jusuf Wanandi and Sungjoo Han, eds., *Asian Security Issues: Regional Security Issues* (Berkley: Institution of East Asian Studies, University of California, 1988), pp. 6-7.

41) Interview with the honorable Japanese Ambassador Matsushiro Horiguchi in Dhaka, Bangladesh on March 3, 2005.

42) Paul Midford, "Japan's Response to Terror: Dispatching the SDF to the Arabia Sea," *Asian Survey* (March/April 2003) Vol. 43, p. 341.

43) Kazuhiko Togo, *Japan's Foreign Policy, 1945-2003: The Quest for A Proactive Policy* (Leiden: Brill, 2005).

44) Masaharu Kohno, "In Search of Proactive Diplomacy: Increasing Japan's International Role in the 1990s," *CNAPS Working Paper* (Fall 1999), available at: http://www.brookings.edu/fp/cnaps/papers/1999_kohno.htm (accessed on April 10, 2006).

45) *Diplomatic Bluebook 2004*, op. cit.

46) Takako Hirose, "Japan's Role in South Asia in the Post-Cold War," in K.V. Kesavan and Lalima Verma, eds., op. cit., p. 99.

respect. Although Japan's bilateral diplomacy failed, its multilateral approach succeeded to some degree, to the extent that it managed to get international organizations such as G-8 and the UN Security Council to put pressure on India and Pakistan. However, India and Pakistan criticized Japan's economic sanctions, which they said would damage their economies. Three years after the nuclear tests, the terrorist attacks on the U.S. in September 2001 changed the South Asian security situation. India and Pakistan gave full support for the "war on terror". As a reward, Japan, the closest ally of the US in Asia, lifted its economic sanctions on India and Pakistan. Since then Japan's relationship with India and Pakistan has improved.

India and Pakistan prepared for a fourth war (possibly nuclear) over the Kashmir dispute after terrorists attacked the Indian Parliament in 2001. During this tense situation, Japan along with other major powers pressed India and Pakistan for de-escalation of the tension through visits by key figures to both countries.⁴⁷⁾ Prime Minister Koizumi had telephone discussions with both Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee and Pakistani President Musharraf. As a part of its actions against the terrorist attack, Japan announced its decision to freeze the assets of two suspected Islamic terrorist organizations Lashkar-e-Toiba (LeT) and Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM).

However, after two years of high tension, the two nuclear rivals began a peace process in the middle of the year 2003. Japan welcomed this. Recently, Prime Minister Koizumi and Foreign Minister Aso visited India and Pakistan to promote the relationship. Both leaders urged India and Pakistan to consider the NPT and CTBT, and at the same time urged India and Pakistan to continue the peace process.

Although Japan has been serious about the nuclear issue, the fact is that it has never been serious about the Kashmir issue. But, without giving proper attention to the root cause of the Indo-Pakistan conflict, Japan's efforts for a nuclear-free South Asia will not be successful. Japanese scholar Mikio Oishi says that Japan has not addressed the Kashmir issue directly but that there will be no true peace in South Asia until the Kashmir issue is settled amicably.⁴⁸⁾ For any permanent solution of the Kashmir issue, the true representatives of the Kashmiri people should be included in

47) "The International Community and Japanese Diplomacy 2001," *Diplomatic Bluebook 2002*.

48) Mikio Oishi, "Japan's Role in Peacemaking in South Asia," in M.D. Dharamdasani, ed., *Japan's Role in South Asia* (New Delhi: Kanishka, 2003), pp. 52-69.

the dialogue. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that Japan has ever asked India or Pakistan to allow Kashmiri separatists groups in particular the moderate groups, who want a political solution of the dispute, in the peace process. After the nuclear tests in 1998, Japan was inclined to mediate between the two countries on the Kashmir conflict. The request came from Pakistan. According to Mikio Oishi, Japan proposed to hold an international conference on the Kashmir issue in the wake of the nuclear tests. However, with India flatly rejecting the offer, Japan *easily* gave up the idea.⁴⁹⁾ But as the largest donor and an impartial actor in Indo-Pakistan conflict, Japan should have more independent strategies to promote its diplomatic efforts and leadership possibilities to manage the conflict.

4. Conclusion: A Comparative Assessment of the Role of Major Powers in Managing Conflict in Kashmir

Based on the above discussion, this paper argues that China lacks credibility and impartiality regarding India while Russia faces the same problem as regards to Pakistan. China has maintained a special relationship with Pakistan. Therefore, it does not fulfill the qualifications to be a mediator in the Kashmir dispute. Meanwhile, Russian views over Kashmir are not different from the views of the Indian government and it thus lacks the impartiality to be a mediator. In addition, these two countries don't have much political or economic leverage on either disputant. As for the U.S., although it has strong political and economic leverage on both disputants it lacks impartiality and credibility as the U.S. has changed its strategy several times in the past based on its national interests and the evolving situation. Both India and Pakistan have been skeptical of U.S. motives in this region.

From another perspective, the author argues that to see a peaceful solution of the Kashmir dispute the current arms race between India and Pakistan should be brought to an end. Nevertheless, Russia, China, and the U.S. have fueled the arms race between India and Pakistan. Already, Pakistan and India are spending more money on arms than they can possibly afford. This is a tragedy for their people, given the poverty in

49) *Ibid.*, p. 64.

the two countries.

Japan, on the other hand, has been impartial in the India-Pakistan conflict for a long time. Moreover, as the largest donor, Japan has economic leverage on both India and Pakistan. In addition, while the other major powers have fueled the South Asian arms race, Japan has refrained. In view of this difference, this study observes that compared to other major powers Japan is in an ideal position to mediate the Kashmir dispute. However, it must also be noted that due to lack of strong political will and diplomatic ability Japan cannot just use its economic leverage strategically to manage the conflict. Japan has been reluctant to take the Kashmir issue seriously because of Indian opposition to mediation of the conflict. But without addressing the root cause of India-Pakistan rivalry, there will be no light at the end of the tunnel for Japan's efforts to bring about peace in south Asia.

The following Table illustrates different positions of each major power in regard to leverage and impartiality in managing the Kashmir conflict. In the case of the US, it has a high leverage but lacks impartiality. On the other hand, Russia and China lack both impartiality and leverage on both disputants. Japan, however, is ideally suited as a mediator because it has both impartiality and sufficient leverage. In comparison to other major powers, Japan has medium leverage. But it has potential to promote its leverage by increasing its diplomatic strategy in South Asia.

Criteria	The U.S.	Russia	China	Japan
Leverage	High	Low	Low	Medium
Impartiality	Low	Absent	Absent	High

Table: A Comparative Assessment of Major Powers: Criteria for an Ideal Mediator in Managing Conflict between India and Pakistan

At the end of this paper, the author argues that Kashmir has become a tragic state for a long time, and humanity is suffering deeply there. These people deserve the right to determine their own future. As a responsible member of the international community Japan should and can put convincing pressure on both India and Pakistan

to accept the benefits of its role as a third party mediator in the Kashmir dispute. But will India and Pakistan accept Japan's mediation role? Indian's opposition to any third party mediation is already mentioned. Nonetheless, this paper suggests that if India wants to promote its leadership role in South Asia and beyond, it should allow particularly Japan, a "development partner" of India for decades, to mediate the conflict India has failed to resolve bilaterally over the last six decades. India and Pakistan have fought, made treaties, gone on again to breach them. They need a guarantee of the agreements that Japan as a mediator can provide.