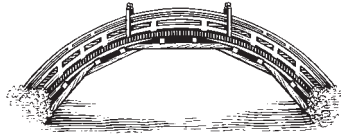


BOOK REVIEW ROUNDTABLE

Navnita Chadha Behera's  
*Demystifying Kashmir*

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*Robert Wirsing*  
*Teresita C. Schaffer*  
*Sumit Ganguly*  
*Shalendra Sharma*  
*Navnita Chadha Behera*

## Re-mystifying Kashmir

*Robert Wirsing*

Behera's earlier book on Kashmir, *State, Identity and Violence: Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh* (Manohar, 2000), which innovatively examined how the unitary structure and centralizing ideology of the Indian state gave shape to ethnic separatism in the chronically restive state of Jammu and Kashmir, heralded her arrival as a serious scholar of the Kashmir dispute. The present work, *Demystifying Kashmir*, incorporates and elaborates upon the earlier work's themes. Having a far larger canvas, impressive documentation, and formidable argumentation, this book plants Behera firmly in the front ranks of Kashmir scholarship. This new work is, however, burdened by theoretical and ideological baggage that seriously diminishes the enlightenment promised in the book's somewhat ambitious title.

Let it be said at the outset that Behera is a skilled writer with few equals when it comes to dissecting the intricacies of Kashmir's internal politics. Doggedly (and correctly) insistent that most other writers on Kashmir have been overly focused on Kashmir as a zero-sum *territorial* dispute between India and Pakistan, she persuasively draws the reader to consider the much more complicated political and ethno-religious situations found within both the Indian- and Pakistan-administered portions of the state.

Behera's re-examination of Kashmir does not stop with its internal dimension. Boldly cast as "an attempt to redefine the Kashmir conflict," the book in fact leaves few aspects untouched. Behera probes in detail both India's and Pakistan's Kashmir strategies, the local political (especially ethnic) dynamics on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) (including a rare look at what she calls the "forgotten" landscape of Pakistan's Azad Kashmir and Northern Areas), the evolution of the Kashmir insurgency, the international context, and, in a final chapter, a wide-ranging look at the ongoing peace process. This last chapter, which in my view is the book's most realism-imbued discussion, is an unrivaled deconstruction of what she terms "the peace puzzle." With commendable objectivity, and without raising any false hopes, she deftly surveys the possibilities as seen from Indian, Pakistani, and Kashmiri perspectives.

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**ROBERT WIRSING** is Professor of Security Studies at the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies. Previously he was a South Asia area specialist in the Department of Government and International Studies at the University of South Carolina. He is available at <[wirsingr@apccs.org](mailto:wirsingr@apccs.org)>.

On the downside, the book has three fairly conspicuous limitations arising from the author's choice of ideological, theoretical, and conceptual lenses through which to view the Kashmir conflict.

### *How Many Madrasahs Make a Jihad?*

The first and probably most serious limitation is Behera's occasional lapse into national partisanship—a noticeable tendency to set objectivity aside when addressing the India-Pakistan adversarial relationship. This tendency implies in general a pro-India tilt, yet in a few instances also results in the naive acceptance as incontestable fact the lurid characterizations of Pakistan spun out by the world's bustling anti-Pakistan propaganda industry. This tendency, which surfaces throughout the book, is most evident in chapters two and three where Behera considers first India's, then Pakistan's, Kashmir strategy.

The tone of chapter two is set right in the first paragraph, where Behera offers the comforting observation that “although New Delhi has now and then strayed from its democratic, federal, and secular commitments to the people in Jammu and Kashmir, over the years the Indian polity has developed a democratic resilience to learn from its mistakes” (p. 30). She seems not to be bothered that this exculpatory comment wildly contradicts her own descriptions of New Delhi-imposed rule in Kashmir made later in the same chapter. Such descriptions include, for instance, Behera's assertions that Kashmir's political system, created by Bakshi Ghulam Mohammad (“Delhi's man” installed in 1953 upon the arrest of Sheikh Abdullah) was “an undemocratic, highly coercive, and centralized state apparatus with a thoroughly corrupt administration that ruthlessly suppressed all political dissent” (p. 41) and that New Delhi's appointment of Shri Jagmohan as governor in 1990 ushered in “a long spell of state repression” marked by routine “beatings, intimidation, verbal abuse and humiliation, widespread torture, rape, arbitrary detention of scores of youth suspected of being militants, and shootings by the security forces at public processions and in crowded market areas” (p. 48). Instead Behera seems determined to represent India as a reactive state, with a “defensive strategic outlook” (p. 69), “a nonaggressive cultural worldview,” a “noncoercive notion of power,” and with “*no offensive* military objectives in Kashmir” (p. 64).

When Pakistan's turn for inspection comes in chapter three, however, Behera's tone changes. “Where India's political strategy in Kashmir is risk-averse and practically void of military inputs,” she tells us, “Pakistan's is quite the opposite” (p. 73). Risk-prone, aggressive, militaristic, and with a

“predilection for forcibly changing the status quo in Kashmir” (p. 73), Pakistan possesses very little that qualifies as a *political* strategy.

Behera’s enthusiasm for her subject mounts substantially when she turns her attention in this chapter to “Jihad as an Instrument of State Policy.” That her caution in sifting fact from fiction doesn’t mount along with the enthusiasm is unfortunate. Behera cites frightening—but frightfully inaccurate—statistics about Pakistan’s descent into religious fanaticism. The use of jihad as state policy, she writes,

had led to an exponential growth of the jihadi infrastructure within Pakistan. It has approximately 40,000–50,000 madrassah institutions with an estimated strength of 1 million to 2 million students. The armed jihadis number about 200,000, which is equal to one-third of the 600,000-strong Pakistani army. Over a million young people, who are drawn to jihad but are not armed, provide further backing to this 200,000-strong force (p. 83).

Now, no one appears to know exactly how many madrasah institutions there are in Pakistan, how many Pakistani students are enrolled in such institutions, or the precise number of armed jihadis and their unarmed supporters. But I know enough about the subject to be certain beyond a shadow of a doubt that Behera’s figures are grossly inflated. Recent and well-informed discussions of the subject by Christine Fair, Saleem Ali, and Alexander Evans are uniformly of the view that the madrasahs, while unquestionably posing a big problem for Pakistan, have not been dealt with fairly or accurately in most of the Western media.<sup>1</sup> A few dozen Pakistani madrasahs, says Evans, have served as de facto training grounds for jihadists. Critics unfortunately “extrapolate from this relatively small number of problem madrassahs in Pakistan and conclude that all madrassahs breed fanatics. But they are wrong. The majority of madrassahs actually present an opportunity, not a threat” (p. 9).

Not even the International Crisis Group (ICG), which on the subject of Pakistan has itself been known to stray from evenhandedness, goes as far as Behera. In an amended 2005 version of its July 2002 report on Pakistan’s madrasahs,<sup>2</sup> the ICG more or less accepted a government estimate of their

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<sup>1</sup> C. Christine Fair, “Islamic Education in Pakistan” report stemming from a talk given in Washington, D.C., on March 21, 2006 (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 2006); Saleem H. Ali, “Islamic Education and Conflict: Understanding the Madrassahs of Pakistan,” draft project report prepared with a grant from the United States Institute of Peace, July 1, 2005, copy supplied by the author; and Alexander Evans, “Understanding Madrasahs: How Threatening Are They?” *Foreign Affairs* 85, no. 1 (January/February 2006): 9–16.

<sup>2</sup> “Pakistan: Madrasahs, Extremism and the Military,” ICG Asia Report No. 36 (Islamabad/Brussels: International Crisis Group, July 29, 2002, as amended on July 15, 2005).

number at around 10,000—four to five times less than Behera asserts. The ICG’s amended version, by the way, was necessitated by the revelation that the ICG report’s original claim that “about a third of all children in Pakistan in education attend madrasas” (p. i) was itself in dire need of correction: the inadvertent wrong positioning of a decimal, it turns out, had increased madrasah enrollment tenfold, prompting a fierce battle over statistics between the ICG and its critics. Perhaps Behera also needs to recheck her decimals.

### *Remaking Kashmir from the Bottom Up*

A second limitation stems from Behera’s theoretical orientation. In her earlier book on Kashmir, Behera took a post-modernist approach which, she wrote then, “seeks to reinvigorate the social domain through the new social movements—a term that gained currency among theorists sympathetic to the peace, feminist, ecology and local autonomy movements” (p. 280). In the book under review, this approach—especially the demand for political recognition of and participation by hitherto ignored and subordinate (or “subaltern”) identity groups—is again central to the argument. Indeed, the key “players” in this work are as often as not the diverse ethnic and sectarian communities found in very large numbers on both sides of the LoC.

Now there is no question that most of these groups, along with their interests, have generally been marginalized, as much by scholars of Kashmir as by the governments (both central and provincial) ruling them. Behera, in contrast, acknowledges the circumstances of these groups, addresses their aspirations, and insists they be given a voice both in the peace process and in framing the political constructs created to house them. More pointedly and persuasively than anyone else, she has laid bare the fundamental injustice implicit in the demand by Kashmiri-speaking Muslims—who comprise perhaps 60% of the population of Indian-administered Kashmir—for the grant of “self-determination” of a kind that would entrench majority rule in a state with a large number of minorities.

The trouble with this “bottom-up” approach is twofold: First, this approach assumes that the Kashmir dispute is mainly about local group identities, when the history of the conflict suggests that other factors—including domestic political constraints in both India and Pakistan, resource (energy and water) scarcities, the region’s nuclear weaponization, the war on terror, and the looming Sino-Indian strategic rivalry—play an equal or greater role. In reckonings about Kashmir, neither Pakistan nor India has ever given highest priority to *any* group of Kashmiris or, indeed, to the desire of

any group for self-determination. Second, in calling upon India and Pakistan to resolve Kashmir by remaking themselves into local player-centric, multi-layered, and essentially confederal political constructs, Behera places herself well outside the domain of practical politics and political realism.

### *Remaking Kashmir from the Inside Out*

A third and closely related limitation in Behera's approach is tied to her strong emphasis on what might be called the *internalities* of the Kashmir dispute—the political aspirations and maneuverings of local actors. Neglected in this approach are the dispute's *externalities*—the numerous international forces and circumstances that have always played a huge role in shaping the dispute and that continue to be powerful drivers. Behera, unquestionably aware of these drivers, in the concluding chapter on the peace process outlines their significance. But in chapter seven, where the “international arena” is specifically addressed, the discussion focuses almost exclusively on the major global powers' lack of material interest in Kashmir and sharply limited ability to influence related outcomes. Largely missing or under emphasized is the huge influence on Kashmir exercised by the dispute's external or strategic context. What always has borne heavily upon Kashmir's political evolution is the stuff of international politics—patterns of alliance, deployment of military forces and weapons acquisitions, resource rivalry, international norms of intervention, covert actions, and so on. Thus Kashmir's future is bound to be shaped at least as much from the outside in as from the inside out.

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## Putting the Kashmiris Into the Kashmir Issue

*Teresita C. Schaffer*

**K**ashmir is the best-known dispute between India and Pakistan, yet Kashmir itself—its people, history, and problems—is remarkably little known outside a small group of specialists. Navnita Chadha Behera's book,

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**TERESITA C. SCHAFFER** is Director of the South Asia Program at the Center for Strategic and International Studies. She is a retired U.S. ambassador with long experience in South Asia. She can be reached at <tschaffer@csis.org>.

along with an earlier work, *State, Identity and Violence: Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh*, is a most welcome remedy to this gap.

In both books, Behera describes a region that was brought together through a series of historical accidents, but where for centuries the central areas at least have had a strong sense of separate identity. She describes the pull of competing identities and the decades-long ebb and flow of secular and Islam-centered definitions of nationalism among Kashmiris. *State, Identity and Violence* focuses more on the internal picture, whereas *Demystifying Kashmir* puts this Kashmir-centric analysis into a broader regional and international context.

The most compelling part of Behera's story is the interplay between Kashmir, on the one hand, and Indian and Pakistani policy and attitudes, on the other. The Kashmir problem began as a dispute over territory; what has made it toxic has been incompatible national identities.

India saw itself as a secular, multi-religious state. Behera characterizes Indian strategy as primarily political, having roots in India's drive to fit Kashmir into the mosaic of India's multi-ethnic, multicultural democracy. In theory, given the large number of other distinct local identities in the Indian union, the Indian model should have provided a comfortable home for Kashmiri particularism. In practice, however, Kashmir's circumstances made it hard to apply the model. Kashmiris were from the start divided about whether they wanted to be part of India, and India's tactics by turns invoked the people's will and played fast and loose with it during long periods when Delhi manipulated the leadership in the Kashmir valley. Behera puts it well: "Kashmiri nationalism had been stifled by Indian nationalism."

Pakistan's chosen identity was as the homeland for the Muslims of the subcontinent, but the fact that the Kashmir Valley was in Indian hands deprived Pakistan of a major Muslim-majority region. Behera sees Pakistan's strategy as chiefly military. Having long been Pakistan's major political actor, the army saw the task of gaining Kashmir for Pakistan as the ultimate vindication of its status as guardian of the nation. To this end, the military used a shifting blend of conventional and sub-conventional tactics, with "irregulars" leading Pakistan's military efforts in 1949, a regular army operation in 1965, and irregulars back in the forefront after 1989. I agree with Behera's judgment that the army has been a key player but believe she somewhat short-changes two other aspects of Pakistan's strategy. The first is the strategy's legal roots in the 1949 U.N. resolutions on Kashmir and those resolutions' demand for a plebiscite; the second is Pakistan's stress on Kashmir's Muslim identity. Pakistan's Islamic identity was an attraction at various times for Kashmiris alienated from

Delhi, but the more nationalistic among them came also to resent Pakistan's insistence that Kashmiris must support accession to Pakistan.

The least known participants in this clash of identities are the Kashmiris. They have traditionally seen themselves as a separate people, not wanting to be absorbed into either collectivity, among whom Muslims were in the majority and yet a distinctive, syncretistic culture flourished. Behera recounts with skill and subtlety how different identities compete for Kashmiri allegiance—the Islamic identity, the identity of the larger Indian world, and the sometimes clashing subregional identities of Ladakhis, Jammuites, and residents of the Kashmir Valley, the most intense subject of dispute. She describes in vivid detail the way the key personalities shifted their emphasis between Islam and “Kashmiriyat.” She includes a chapter on the parts of Kashmir under Pakistan's control, areas frequently omitted from analyses of Kashmir.

Especially after 1989 a militant movement that arose out of local nationalism came to be overshadowed by its hard-line, Islamic extremist elements; in the process the dispute over Kashmir acquired a harder ideological edge. Behera provides a valuable account of this transformation including the resulting toll it has taken on Kashmir itself. She acknowledges both India's and Pakistan's efforts to manipulate not only the Kashmir issue but also the Kashmiris themselves. Kashmir's political leaders do not appear in a particularly favorable light—the earlier generation had considerable stature but were both manipulative and manipulated; today's leaders come across as petty. Yet as highlighted by Behera there is need for real leadership in Kashmir.

Behera devotes a chapter to “the peace puzzle.” She begins with a plea for an inclusive process including several layers of discussions, some of which would provide the framework for the participation of Kashmiris from different stakeholder groups and different subregions. The Kashmiris, strangely enough, have never been part of any of the serious peace efforts on Kashmir. Pakistan has urged that its Kashmiri friends be included in the process, though this may reflect a belief that the Kashmiris were likely to support the Pakistani position. In recent years India has on several occasions begun dialogues with Kashmiris. India has strenuously resisted Pakistani and Kashmiri calls for “three-sided” discussions including both Pakistan and Kashmiris; indeed, India has not been willing to conduct serious discussions at the same time with Pakistan and Kashmiris, even if those discussions were to take place in different rooms. Behera's call for a multi-layered process is a way of sidestepping this historical baggage.



Behera goes on to sketch out three broad policy options each for India, Pakistan, the Kashmiris, and the international community. What makes Behera's analysis of these options particularly useful is her willingness to look at the unintended consequences that might flow from each line of policy. Behera's own preference lies with the options that would have India and Pakistan make a Kashmir settlement a real priority, with the Kashmiris negotiating parallel but distinct self-government arrangements with both India and Pakistan. Behera sees these options as, sadly, the most difficult for each party to adopt, and, while presenting options for the international community, does not appear to see outside countries as making much difference to the timing or outcome in Kashmir. Interestingly, Pakistani President Musharraf made a proposal in late November 2006, which appears to suggest this kind of parallel self-government, so perhaps the prospects are not as bleak as Behera suggests.

I also wish Behera had dealt in greater depth with the economic dimension. My work on this subject suggests that there are a wide variety of measures the Indian or Pakistani authorities could take independently of one another that could help build peace constituencies. Additionally self-governance proposals for Kashmir could be tremendously strengthened by a few strategically chosen joint economic initiatives—such as combining the electric grids or, more ambitiously, working toward a free trade area that encompassed all (or a major part) of the old princely state of Jammu and Kashmir. This is indeed the only context in which joint action makes sense. President Musharraf's calls for "joint administration" in Kashmir is a recipe for trouble; the Indus Waters Treaty, which is the most successful India-Pakistan agreement to date, has held up for 46 years largely because the treaty does not require daily interaction and joint decisionmaking by those two estranged governments.

These are, nevertheless, small criticisms. Navnita Chadha Behera has written a valuable book. I wish only that her final chapter had not left me feeling depressed.

## Explaining the Kashmir Conundrum: Prospects and Limitations

*Sumit Ganguly*

**N**avnita Chadha Behera's book, *Demystifying Kashmir*, is a work of considerable ambition. Comprehensive in scope, carefully researched, and thoroughly documented, this work is also mostly dispassionate given the extremely fraught features of the subject. Political analysts, journalists, and policymakers with little knowledge of the complexity of the Kashmir conundrum will benefit from this all-encompassing work. Of particular significance to those in the policymaking community are her pithy summaries of extant policy options toward the dispute from the standpoints of India, Pakistan, and the global community.

Despite these significant strengths, the book is not bereft of problems. This assessment focuses on four limitations of scholarship and policy relevance. First, much of the ground that Behera covers in such detail and with considerable care has been well trodden. There is little or no new scholarship, nor are there dramatic revelations based upon archival or documentary material; to her credit, however, Behera has deftly sifted through an enormous welter of previously utilized primary and secondary sources on the Kashmir question. As a consequence, she has managed to provide a succinct and lucid summary of the domestic, regional, and international aspects of the dispute. Behera deserves particular encomium for her thorough discussion of the ethnic diversity of Kashmir, a subject that political scientists have for the most part either neglected or discussed only in passing. Nevertheless, despite this dexterous sifting of extant scholarship Behera arrives at no novel conclusion about the issues involved.

Second, the work displays an obvious fondness for some stock post-modernist ideas about states and nationalism. Unfortunately, these propositions have a rather shop-worn quality to them and have, quite frankly, done little to advance either theoretical insight or policy prescriptions. To be told that the modern state-building project and nationalism are "hegemonic" (p. 240) and "homogenizing" (p. 239) amounts to falling back on clichés and reiterating the obvious.

Regardless of one's normative and political preferences, the modern nation-state has proved to be a rather durable entity, the possibilities of

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**SUMIT GANGULY** is a Professor of Political Science, Director of the India Studies Institute, and the holder of the Rabindranath Tagore Chair in Indian Cultures and Civilizations at Indiana University, Bloomington. He is available at <sganguly@indiana.edu>.

European integration notwithstanding. The nation-state will, in all likelihood, outlast the present century. Real or imagined national and sub-national groups still yearn to create states of their own and are even prepared to go to extraordinary lengths to pursue those goals. Ironically, as Behera's research shows, Kashmiri nationalists of various ideological persuasions are seeking to create nation-states of their own.

The putative homogenizing properties of the modern-nation state are also a familiar post-modernist lament. Yet it is hard to imagine how modern, industrial states can possibly function effectively without some form of organized uniformity in terms of educational policies, administrative practices, and commercial regulations. Obviously, poly-ethnic states with federal arrangements can address questions of regional and local differences with greater ease and less contention than can centralized, unitary states. Railing at the "hegemonic" (p. 240) propensities of the Indian state does little to advance the cause of either intellectual clarity or policy relevance.

Third, despite all the ground covered the book lacks a central puzzle or theoretical argument. In attempting to examine every possible facet of the Kashmir dispute, the book becomes sprawling and encyclopedic but loses both theoretical and substantive focus. Consequently, the work fails to register a definite theoretical contribution.

Fourth and finally, in her attempt to carve out a novel approach to the Kashmir question Behera caricatures the arguments and contributions of previous work on the subject. For example, when discussing my book, *The Crisis in Kashmir: Portents of War, Hopes of Peace*, on the origins of the Kashmir insurgency, Behera takes me to task for my failure to explain the absence of violent hostility toward the Indian state in the non-Muslim majority portions of Kashmir. I would argue that this critique is irrelevant because my principal purpose was to provide a theoretically informed, parsimonious, and policy-relevant analysis of the origins of the insurgency in the Kashmir Valley. The locus of the insurgency, not surprisingly, is in the Muslim-majority part of the state. Because they had few, if any, viable options for either voice or exit, the Buddhists of Ladakh and the Hindus of Jammu would obviously not rebel against the Indian state, despite facing the same electoral malfeasances. Hence, to use Albert Hirschmann's logic and language, they grudgingly chose loyalty.

Behera also takes me to task for placing the insurgency in the context of Indo-Pakistani relations. I believe that, since Pakistan has an irredentist claim to Kashmir and has long sought to foment discord in the state, locating the discussion within the context of Indo-Pakistani relations made both logical

and substantive sense. I would point out that, unlike a host of Indian scholars and commentators, I did not seek to blithely suggest that the insurgency of 1989 was the product of nefarious Pakistani designs. Instead my book went to some length to show that previous Pakistani attempts to sow discord in Kashmir had failed. Ironically, the Pakistanis managed to exploit the extant political grievances after 1989 because a new generation of Kashmiris, who had acquired a degree of political sophistication thanks to the economic and social policies of the Indian state, would no longer tolerate its continued electoral chicanery.

These shortcomings and criticisms of the work notwithstanding, I would like to reiterate that Behera's research will be of considerable value to the intelligent but non-specialist audience.

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## The Kashmir Quagmire: How to End It

*Shalendra Sharma*

In her erudite and insightful work, Navnita Chadha Behera provocatively challenges the dominant narrative of the intractable “Kashmir question.” This narrative has long viewed the problem as mainly a territorial dispute between two hostile neighbors: India and Pakistan. With great patience and nuance, Behera tells us that there is much more to the story than this. Going beyond the stereotypical view of the state of Jammu and Kashmir as a convulsive region divided sharply along primordial religious lines, she incisively illustrates that the state—home to an myriad mix of peoples, cultures, languages, and religions—is actually one of the most diverse in the subcontinent.<sup>1</sup> Given this reality on the ground, she makes a spirited case

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**SHALENDRA SHARMA** is Professor in the Department of Politics at the University of San Francisco. He is the author of *The Asian Financial Crisis: Meltdown, Reform and Recovery* (2003). His latest book, *From Vision to Action: Strategies to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals*, will be released in 2007 by Routledge. He is available at <sharmas@usfca.edu>.

<sup>1</sup> The state of Jammu and Kashmir is an amalgam of peoples of diverse ethnolinguistic and religious background. Indian-controlled Kashmir consists of three core areas: the Kashmir Valley (or the Vale), Jammu, and Ladakh. The Kashmir Valley is overwhelmingly Muslim, Jammu is mainly Hindu, and Ladakh is mainly Buddhist. The Pakistan controlled sector is divided into two parts: Azad, or “Free Kashmir,” and the northern territories of Gilgit and Hunza. The Chinese control the Aksai Chin region in northeastern Ladakh.

that recognizing the rich, complex, and multifaceted character of Kashmir is important not only for understanding the structural causes of the simmering conflict but also for providing opportunities to establish a just and lasting peace.

Behera's arguments are particularly compelling because they are based on extensive archival and field research and draw on a broad array of primary sources. This dogged attention to detail, interwoven with the author's seemingly encyclopedic knowledge of the region, enables her to provide *both* a sober and balanced history of Kashmir from pre-partition India to the present day and a deeply empathetic account of a region in crisis. Behera is at her best, however, when she illuminates in painstaking detail the complex confluence of competing ideals, historical forces, and local, regional, and international protagonists (as well as their power calculations and ambitions) underpinning the Kashmir conflict. While the story regarding the political and military components of India's and Pakistan's "Kashmir strategy," the self-determination debate, and the violent insurgent movement that began in 1989 has been told before, Behera's account is richer than most. Eschewing acrimony and polemics, she judiciously pulls together a mass of complex information and insights into a solid, convincing, and eminently readable account.

Yet there is a grudging sense that something is missing from this otherwise fine volume. Two issues come to mind. First, the conclusion which focuses on what Behera terms the "Four P's"—parameters, players, politics, and prognosis of the ongoing peace process in Kashmir—remains rather vague and unconvincing. Second, and more importantly, the author misses the opportunity to reconcile how the conflict is a political battle of state-making between India and Pakistan as well as a communal Hindu-Muslim conflict. By framing the conflict as a political battle of state-making between India and Pakistan rather than also a sectarian Hindu-Muslim conflict, Behera misses a crucial element of the conflict in Kashmir.

No doubt, the dispute over Kashmir has plagued relations between India and Pakistan since their creation in 1947. The two countries have fought three wars (1948, 1965, and 1999) over Kashmir, and in 2001–02 came close to using nuclear weapons to resolve the crisis. Despite intense pressure from Washington on the leadership of both India and Pakistan to find a diplomatic solution, including other multilateral efforts to negotiate a viable deal, the Kashmir problem remains no closer to a resolution. Why?

Clearly the many false steps, vacillations, and failures on all sides are a major reason. Yet it is important to recognize that, while it did not began

that way (the Kashmiri secessionist movement which began in 1989–1990 was indigenous in character), the Kashmir conflict has become primarily communal in nature as a new breed of Islamic nationalism-fused militancy and Kashmiri nationalism. One of the reasons why the conflict is so difficult to resolve is that significant numbers of Kashmiri Muslims profoundly believe that they are waging an existential war of resistance against an “infidel” Hindu India. Organizations such as the Students’ Islamic Federation or Jamaat-e-Islami and the secessionist JKLF (Jammu and Kashmir Liberation Front) only sharpened the religious component within Kashmiri nationalism. Moreover, to advance its irredentist goals, Pakistan’s clandestine “Talibanization” of Kashmir—which saw the unleashing of extremist Sunni Islamist “*jihadi* groups” such as the terrorist Lashkar-i-Toyiba, the Jaish-i-Mohammed, and the Hizbul Mujahideen—initially pitted the majority of Kashmiri Muslims against the Hindu Kashmiri Pandits. The situation only deteriorated as the mainly Kashmiri Muslims became further estranged by the punitive actions of the Indian (mainly Hindu) security forces. Once the roughly 150,000–200,000 beleaguered Pandits were forcefully evicted from their ancestral homes in the Kashmir Valley by the militant’s nihilistic religious-cleansing drive, these Sunni militants (made up of both Kashmiri and foreign *jihadis*) turned on the smaller communities of Gujjars, Bakkarwals, Dogras, Ladakhi Buddhists, and Shi’a Muslims. Their horrific communal actions marked the end of the tolerant religious-cultural practices of *Kashmiriyat* and sufism for which the Kashmir Valley was once so famous. As the home-grown Hizbul Mujahideen openly began to characterize Kashmiri struggle for self-determination as jihad, the slide toward political polarization and bitter sectarian violence was inevitable.

Behera correctly notes the militant movement for *azadi* (freedom) has clearly fizzled out as the decade-long wanton violence, the criminalization of militant ranks, and the region’s economic decline have left Kashmiris deeply disillusioned. Yet the desire for *azadi* in Jammu and Kashmir remains intact. While I generally agree with Behera’s core argument that any lasting solution must involve all the parties, a few caveats must be noted. Over the past six decades a whole series of proposals have been floated to resolve the Kashmir problem. These include partition along the Line of Control, “soft-borders” between the two parts of Kashmir, a region-by-region plebiscite of Kashmiris, a state-wide referendum, U.N. trusteeship, the creation of an autonomous region, and even outright independence. Any comprehensive solution to the problem, however, will require significant concessions by both India and Pakistan—albeit, without an end to cross-border terrorism, no political

leadership in New Delhi will be in a position to make significant concessions. Equally important, any lasting agreement must meet the aspirations of all Kashmiris. Currently, few Kashmiri Hindus, Shia Muslims, Buddhists, and other groups would readily join any Sunni-dominated government or political organization. Bridging this dissonance is key to finding a durable solution to the Kashmir dilemma.

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### Author's Response

*Navnita Chadha Behera*

I am deeply grateful to the reviewers for their thoughtful comments. I share many of their observations and wish here to briefly address some of the issues they have raised.

The conceptual lens of post-modernism tends to evoke strong reactions in the domain of *realpolitik*. Ganguly and Wirsing find little value in using a post-modernist approach due to its apparent limitations in producing policy-relevant research. Yet Wirsing commends the “realism-imbued” discussion of the book’s last chapter on “the Peace Puzzle,” which Ganguly also finds to be “of particular significance to those in the policy making community.” These comments indicate that bridging this gap is indeed possible, provided there is a clear understanding of what the concept stands for.

The core theoretical argument of my thesis is that a disjuncture between the plural social realities and the unitary state structures of the modern nation-state lies at the root of tensions and unrest in its polity. The remedy lies in creating alternative and intermediate political structures to give voice to the pluralities—religion, class, caste, ethnic, and linguistic—that make up the identity of the modern nation state. From this standpoint, a post-modernist approach that inculcates a greater sensitivity and respect for the diverse viewpoints—in contrast to the single narrative of modern nation-state, which seeks to subsume and solely represent all social, cultural, economic, and political aspirations of various communities—is better suited to explain the

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**NAVNITA CHADHA BEHERA** teaches in the political science department at Delhi University (India) and is a former visiting scholar in foreign policy studies at the Brookings Institution. She can be reached at <behera@airtelbroadband.in>.

deeply plural realities of the Jammu and Kashmir society. Recognizing this society's rich, complex, and multi-faceted character is critically important not only for understanding the structural causes of conflict but also for providing opportunities to establish a just, viable, and lasting solution. I agree with Ganguly that the nation-state is "here to stay." At stake, however, is not the resilience of the idea of nation-state per se but the need to understand the nation-state's different, as well as changing, political character. This perspective also characterizes the central argument of the book: the Kashmir conflict needs to be understood primarily as a political battle of state-making involving three principal actors (i.e., India, Pakistan, and the people of Jammu and Kashmir on both sides of the Line of the Control) rather than as either a territorial conflict between India and Pakistan or an ideological, Hindu-Muslim conflict.

None of the critical junctures in Kashmir's political history—Kashmir's accession to India, Sheikh Abdullah's separatist agenda in the 1950s, and the insurgent movement in the 1990s—can be fully explained without understanding the Kashmiris' divergent notions of their statehood or those of the Indian and Pakistani leadership. Chapter one debunks the traditional argument that the genesis of the Kashmir conflict lay in the Hindu Maharaja Hari Singh's decision to accede to India, which violated the partition's principle of the two-nation theory. Though the legality of Jammu and Kashmir's accession was undoubtedly completed by Maharaja's signing of the Instrument of Accession, far more important was the political *choice* of a popular Muslim leader like Sheikh Abdullah to join India as well as his unequivocal repudiation of the two-nation theory. The rationale for Sheikh's decision lay in the belief that Kashmir's political future would be more secure in the democratic, secular, and federal polity of India than in the feudal state of Pakistan. Sheikh's differences with Nehru later grew due to their divergent notions of Kashmir's political status within the Indian Union. Nehru's attempts to integrate Jammu and Kashmir were perceived by these areas as eroding their political autonomy. Likewise, in the 1990s successive government impositions of political choices on the Kashmiris' and appropriation of their political space by centralized political structures forced them to take the path of secession. Yet this is only one part of the story.

Explanation of the outcome—the failure of the Kashmiri secessionist agenda in the 1950s and the 1990s—requires an understanding of the political character of the Jammu and Kashmir state. This is because while fighting against India's integrative pressures the Kashmiri leadership had replicated the unitary power structures in Jammu and Kashmir, thus alienating the



two. The Kashmiri leadership demanded the right of self-determination in the name of “the people of Jammu and Kashmir” but campaigned on behalf of only the majority community: Kashmiri Muslims. The collective and consistent opposition of the state’s linguistic, regional, and religious minorities checkmated the demand of the Kashmiri Muslims for secession. In fact, no movement in Jammu and Kashmir has succeeded in achieving its objectives without both being inclusive in its political character and social base and representing the political interests of *all* groups as distinct from those in the *majority*. The deeply political character of the Jammu Kashmir polity, therefore, makes it imperative for all the principal players to devise instruments and processes for restructuring the rules of the game so as to ensure that power sharing is inclusive. This step is necessary not only for reasons of equity and legitimacy but to “make it work” in the long term, thus preparing the ground for eminently policy-relevant prescriptions for solution of the conflict.

At the national level too, the possibility of the Indian state acquiring a confederal political character is well within the realm of practical politics. That the political character of the Indian nation-state is gradually, albeit irreversibly, undergoing a transformation is shown not only by the growing trend of coalition politics at the center but also by the creation of state structures to accommodate the diverse political aspirations of linguistic, ethnic, cultural, and regional identities; the institutionalization of *panchayats* (village councils) as the third stratum of governance through the 73rd and 74th constitutional amendments; and the willingness of the political leadership to introduce intermediate state structures such as the Ladakh Autonomous Hill Development Council.

The story in Pakistan is very different. Due to several historical, political, and international factors, Pakistan’s deep-rooted militarization of state structures are not amenable to a radical transformation and (in my non-partisan analysis) account for Pakistan’s political failures in Kashmir. The façade of “Muslim Brotherhood” hides serious differences between the Kashmiri leadership in Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Northern Areas, on the one hand, and the ruling regimes in Pakistan, on the other. These differences include the stranglehold that Islamabad has on the state structures of Azad Jammu and Kashmir as well as the Northern Areas, which has resulted in a lack of political autonomy in these regions.

Difficult to counter is the charge of partisanship due to the inherently subjective nature of such claims. I would point out in my defence that chapter three, which focuses on Pakistan, draws 67% of reference materials from

Pakistani sources and 13% from international sources; in chapter six on the Pakistani part of Kashmir, these figures are 61% and 28% respectively. This is, however, not to overlook and regret my error, correctly pointed out by Wirsing, in citing the number of madrasas in Pakistan.

That all four reviewers differ in their assessment on the *right* balance of the factors that may be used to explain the Kashmir conflict only testifies to the enormous challenge in presenting a comprehensive analysis of the deep complexities of the conflict. Sharma's argument that the Kashmiri insurgency became protracted due to its increasingly communal character is difficult to evaluate because there is no authentic data available to prove how "significant" is the proportion of those Kashmiris who believe that "they are waging an existential war of resistance against an 'infidel' Hindu India." As chapter five points out, even the Jamaat-i-Islami ideologue Syed Ali Shah Geelani, who was instrumental in re-casting the political discourse and provided a religious rationale for advocating Kashmir's accession to Pakistan, advocates the need to bring back into the Valley the Kashmiri Pandits, who were a part and parcel of the Kashmir Valley's composite nature. Both militants and the Pakistan establishment have used the Islamic card—but to no avail because the Valley Kashmiris have repeatedly rejected it. The Valley Kashmiris strongly resented the hijacking of their political movement by Islamic warriors who had no respect for the religious beliefs of Sufi Islam and debunked their political goal of *azadi* (independence). Among the militants—especially the first generation of their cadre—many used the Islamic card out of a strategic and tactical compulsion to induce their Pakistani patrons to provide funds and arms.

I agree with Ganguly that the Kashmir conflict cannot be fully understood outside the Indo-Pakistani context; to that extent, this book builds on my original thesis offered in *State, Identity and Violence: Jammu, Kashmir and Ladakh*, which focused on the internal dynamics between the Indian state and local identities. The strength of this book, Schaffer valuably points out, lies in the "interplay between Kashmir, on the one hand, and Indian and Pakistani policy and attitudes, on the other." Wirsing, however, feels that there is a continuing over-emphasis on the "internalities" of the Kashmir dispute at the cost of its "externalities." This is a particularly important limitation since internal factors are unlikely to exercise a decisive veto over the peace process; that focus on internal factors is because, as Wirsing points out, "neither Pakistan nor India has ever given highest priority to any group of Kashmiris or, indeed, to the desire of *any* group for self-determination." Though a fair capsule statement, this misses two important points. The first pertains to an important exception, that Nehru's move to grant Kashmir a special status under Article 370 of

the Indian constitution while permitting Kashmir to convene a separate constituent assembly to draw up a state constitution was clearly designed to accommodate Kashmiri aspirations for popular sovereignty. Second, there is a grudging albeit growing realization in New Delhi and Islamabad that there is no way of finding a lasting Kashmir solution without taking into account the diverse political aspirations of all communities living in that state. My book does not neglect the role of international forces, presenting as it does a detailed discussion on these factors, including the strategic importance of Kashmir, the role of the United Nations, and the implications both of the U.S.-Pakistan military alliance and of Pakistan's strategic partnership with China to the U.S.-led global war on terror. I differ with Wirsing's assessment and stand by my argument that, precisely because no vital stakes are involved, the great powers will play only a "behind-the-scenes facilitator's role" in nudging India and Pakistan to sustain the momentum of the peace process, and the basic parameters of the conflict's resolution will be shaped by the principal interlocutors at home. Schaffer makes a valuable suggestion here that a few strategically chosen joint economic initiatives may help provide the critical meeting ground. After all, the biggest test in the ongoing peace process will be the players' collective political will and ingenuity to devise an alternative set of state structures that meets local aspirations for popular sovereignty to be vested in the people of Jammu and Kashmir without necessarily impinging on the issues of territorial sovereignty of India and Pakistan.