

Towards a Win-Win Model for the Kashmir Conflict

By Jen Yi Lee

The Kashmir conflict is a duo-conflict; it is both an internal conflict between India and India-controlled Jammu and Kashmir (IJK) and an external conflict between India and Pakistan. The external dimension of the Kashmir conflict has been the focus of much study. In view of the recent developments in the India-Pakistan bilateral relationship, it is timely to re-focus on the internal dimension of the conflict. This proposal seeks to address that and purports that there can and should be fruitful problem-solving between the central Indian government and the Srinagar-based state government of IJK. This proposal recommends that the “Autonomy Model” be pursued as the solution to the conflict.

Introduction

1.1 Context and Problem

The Kashmir conflict is a duo-conflict; it is both an internal conflict between India and India-controlled Jammu and Kashmir (IJK) and an external conflict between India and Pakistan. The external dimension of the Kashmir conflict has lasted more than five decades and many solutions have focused on that dimension. These solutions essentially require the joint decision-making and implementation of India and Pakistan, which poses two problems.

Firstly, the solutions generally require two estranged and unwilling neighbors to work towards either giving up a slice of the pie they have paid high costs for keeping or to work through layers of administrative details to reach a workable condominium.¹ In the latter, there is the possibility of fresh cause for future discord between the two countries; joined India-Pakistan administration presents a potential for friction, no matter how slight. The situation may be analogous to insisting two enemies become in-laws. Overall, these solutions, by concentrating on the New Delhi-Islamabad axis, relegate the Kashmiris to the sidelines, and deny them decision-making power.

¹ President Musharraf himself addressed the Pakistan media in October 2004, proposing three solutions to bring about a “change in status” to the problem: “Change in status could be independent status, condominium, which includes joint control, it can be UN mandate also.” Telegraph News, 27/10/2004.

Secondly, the latest warmed-up relationship between India-Pakistan² requires an updated approach and solution responsive to the changes. Given the good chance that India and Pakistan will unlikely fight another war soon over Kashmir – although that does not translate into immediate resolution of the conflict itself – it is timely to focus on the internal dimension of the conflict, especially since Kashmir has not yet been included in the peace talks between India and Pakistan. In particular, Pakistan is under real pressure from the US, its patron country, to stop support for Kashmiri insurgent terror activities. With funding and backing for Kashmiri separatist activities collapsing, it serves Kashmir well to re-strategize and re-examine the available options and with Pakistan “taken off its back” for the moment, India is more likely poised to consider Kashmiri requests more openly than before. In short, this period of cease-fire interregnum is pregnant with opportunity for peace-making between India and IJK.

1.2 Focus of Proposal

This proposal seeks to address the home-ground problem between India and Kashmir directly; there can and should be direct problem-solving between the New Delhi central government and Srinagar-based state government of IJK, and it should be recognized that taking Pakistan out of the equation can be liberating and can move the problem-solving process faster.

1.3 Decision-Making Criteria

The best solution-model will have to meet the following criteria:

- High in benefits.
- Low in costs.
- Close match with each party’s interest.
- High feasibility.

1.4 Interests

The positions of India and IJK really mask certain key interests. The principal interests of India may be summed up as the following:

² The past year of cease-fire and longest period of sustained dialogues since 2002, coupled with the implementation of key confidence-building measures, the re-opened trade talks and track-two citizen diplomacy, the exchange of journalists for the first time in history between Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir (IJK) and Pakistan-controlled Azad Kashmir (AK), India’s historic and the unilateral release of Pakistani prisoners of war all indicate real interest in rapprochement between India and Pakistan.

- To uphold the political integrity of India.
- To benefit from the resources of Kashmir.

Kashmir is symbolic of the cornerstone of India's nationhood: a secular India able to embrace all different religious affiliations, which sets it apart from Pakistan's two-nation concept that believes Muslims and Hindus cannot coexist, and which led to the partition of India into India and Pakistan. As the "centerpiece of India's bouquet of democratic diversity,"³ Kashmir represents more than territory; former Prime Minister Vajpayee stated during the Independence Day address in 2002 that "Jammu and Kashmir is an integral part of India...For us, Kashmir is not a piece of land; it is a test case of a secular nation. Jammu and Kashmir is a living example of this."

As evident in the past fifty years of Kashmir conflict, India will pay almost any price to defend that ideology, whether the enemy be Pakistan or Kashmir itself. Allowing the cornerstone of Kashmir to be removed – or voluntarily giving up that cornerstone – renders the entire political foundation on which India rests severe structural damage and can lead to the collapse of the house. Although Kashmir's secession may not necessarily motivate other states to secede, that threat seems real in the minds of Indian politicians.

Kashmiri interests are not as easily defined as those of India. This is due to the different political aspirations of the Kashmiris. The Kashmiri "public" is really several small ethno-linguistic groups and three large distinct religious groups: Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists, who can be crudely delineated along geographical lines, with the Muslims in the Kashmir Valley, Hindus in Jammu and Buddhists in Ladakh. Figure 1 below maps out the three areas.

³ Bose, Sumantra. *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace*. (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003), 44.



Figure 1: Map of Kashmir⁴

According to the 1981 census,⁵ the Kashmir Valley has a population of 3.1 million, or about 50 percent of the population of the whole IJK state. This area has a 95 percent Muslim majority who are mostly pro-*Azaadi* or pro-Pakistan; Jammu and Ladakh constitute the remaining 50 percent of the population and are largely pro-India.

This scenario is complicated by the different political leanings – pro-Pakistan, pro-independence (*azaadi*) or pro-maximum autonomy – of the Kashmiri insurgent groups as largely represented by All Parties Hurriyat Conference (APHC) and Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front (JKLF). However, since separatist sentiments are evidently mostly contained in the Kashmir Valley – where 50 percent of Kashmir’s population is – and not all of the 50 percent are extremist or maximalist in separatist claims, it may be fair to suggest that more than 50 percent is moderate in claims or are open to negotiation so long as the outcome comes closer to the Kashmiri desire for an improved state of affairs. This nebulous “improved state of affairs” can be understood as having:

- Peace restored, so that normalcy can return.
- A revived economy and jobs.
- *Azaadi*, which means freedom, but that can also mean self-determination.

⁴ Map from BBC News website.

⁵ No census was conducted in Kashmir in 1991 due to the volatile situation at that time. Hence, scholarly studies base their assessments on the 1981 census.

Up till the present, the disruption of daily life by Kashmiri insurgents and militants infiltrating across the Line of Control (LoC) between IJK and Pakistan controlled Kashmir and the presence of armed soldiers on the lookout for militant elements have driven the numbers seeking psychiatric help up and brought suicide rates from about one to two per day about fifteen years ago – before the turmoil started – to five a day presently. A return to normalcy will necessitate a gradual demilitarization of the zone and is so crucial in bringing back the tourists; IJK's – and particularly Kashmir Valley's – economy is so dependent on tourism.

The last interest is somewhat less straight-forward, since for the maximalists, *azaadi* can only mean independence from India. Assuming all of Kashmir Valley's Muslim population want to break free from India, whether to form an independent Kashmir or to merge with Pakistan, it will mean that about a near maximum of 50 percent of Kashmir wants to secede. The remaining 50 percent of the population, being largely pro-Indian, is likely to request greater autonomy and devolution of more power from the central government to its state government.

2 Overview of Solution Models

As with many intractable conflicts, India and IJK have each held on to their positions in an intransigent manner and consequently each suffers from blind spots; each party is frequently deprived of an objective examination of the pure economic and political benefits and costs of the positions taken. In particular, the citizens whose taxes fund the sustained conflict are not likely even keeping objective account of the sacrifices made in exchange for certain interests and ideologies taken by the central Indian government and the Kashmiri insurgent groups. Hence, the first consideration of this proposal is an objective walk-through of the potential gains and costs of each model.

2.1 *Independence-Secession Model*

This proposal looks specifically only at the solution-model of granting the entire Indian-controlled Jammu and Kashmir (IJK) independence, which departs radically from various other models of independence proposed by academics, think-tanks and organizations. Two of those proposed models are: a) An independent pre-1947 Jammu and Kashmir princely state and b) An independent Kashmiri Valley. Option (a) is not considered as it reverts back to a need for Pakistani agreement, which is what this proposal seeks to exclude, as discussed in the Introduction. Option (b) is not considered as Kashmir Valley is landlocked by other ethno-linguistic and religious groups and is snowbound in winter, both of which threaten its eventual survival. The independence-model considered here avoids both of those pitfalls.

2.2 *Autonomy Model*

This proposal works with the definition generated in the Livingston Report by the Kashmir Study Group, which defines an autonomous Kashmir as a “sovereign entity but **without international personality**.” In specific terms, this solution-model requires India to handover total legal and administrative control to India-controlled Jammu and Kashmir but also requires

India to continue to provide military defense and to represent Kashmir in terms of foreign affairs. Essentially, this proposal envisions such an autonomous Kashmir to still fly the Indian flag or be under the Indian Union banner.

This proposal will only examine the costs and benefits of two of the various models based on the autonomy solution⁶:

- MODEL I is based on the states of Niue and the Cook Islands' relationship with New Zealand; it will not require Kashmir to pay taxes to India but Kashmir can expect financial or economic assistance from India.
- MODEL II is modeled after Hong Kong's relationship with China's central government, where Kashmir will have to take full responsibility for its own finances while it makes no tax contribution to India.

2.3 *Territorial Status Quo*

This solution-model basically allows the existing administrative devolution of power between the central government and IJK to remain largely the same, but with a focus on helping to create a clean, effective IJK government that truly upholds the spirit of participatory democracy in answer to the Kashmiri aspiration for self-determination.

3 Comparison Methodology

The solution-models will be subject to three tests. They will be rated using three dimensions:

- Attractiveness of each model in terms of the costs and benefits (5.4.1)
- Interests of each party (5.4.2)
- Feasibility or implementation considerations (5.4.3)

All the three dimensions have to be taken into consideration so that the objective – albeit theoretical – costs and benefits and the subjective and perceived needs are subject to a reality check or balance.

3.1 *Cost-Benefits and Interest Match*

Cost-Benefits analysis will be done by ranking each model in terms of each of its benefits. A ranking of 1 to 3 is to be assigned where 1 represents the least favored or least responsive to an interest while 3 represents the most favored or responsive to an interest.

⁶ These models are taken directly from the Livingston Report by the Kashmir Study Group, available from <http://www.kashmirstudygroup.net/>.

3.2 Interest Weightage

Interest weightage tries to give each interest a percentage weightage. Each interest is calculated as percentage of a whole, so that each interest has to be considered in relation to other interests. There are some benefits and costs that may not directly coincide with the interests of India or Kashmir. These are termed “perks.” These are the categories least thought about by the two conflicting parties and are therefore given a negligible 5 percent for each perk. The remaining percentages are then divided according to the importance of the interests as discussed in the Interests section above.

3.3 Feasibility Considerations

Feasibility considerations take into account the likelihood of success for each model. The three factors that will impact the likelihood of success are:

- Economic,
- Political and
- International feasibility

Each model will be ranked in terms of each of these factors. Again, a ranking of 1 to 3 will be used, with 1 being low feasibility and 3 being high feasibility.

4 The Indian Perspective

4.1 Independence-Secession Model

4.1.1 Benefits

The strongest reason for making this the choice is the sheer economic benefits it brings. To keep Kashmir, India fights two wars, one against Pakistan and the other against Kashmiri insurgents. Cutting off Kashmir immediately removes the cause for the two wars. The act of granting Kashmir independence is also an act of cutting away a cancerous growth within India, for this cancerous growth has literally and financially bled India and is the primary reason for the estranged relationship with Pakistan. Hence, the benefits of cutting ties with Kashmir can be measured in terms of the potential economic savings from taking IJK out of the central Indian government’s expenditure budget. IJK’s share of the central government’s budget is relatively

high as a result of the military spending in the region. For a start, the expenditure of maintaining troops at the Siachen glacier alone is approximately US \$ 2 million a month.⁷ This, coupled with other military and investment expenditure intended for Kashmir, is a huge savings.

Liberating Kashmir liberates India: it can move forward with bolder economic plans to alleviate poverty in the North-eastern states, improve needed infrastructure so as to expand the economy to better compete with neighboring countries such as China for foreign investment.

Politically, this move can win India kudos internationally; while such an act of political generosity may not directly lead to better trade/ economic gains with the world, it will certainly enhance India's image positively, and at the very least, absolve itself of human rights violation charges from the point it withdraws from Kashmir. A post 9-11 world is also keen to snuff out Al-Qaeda-linked Jihadi groups, of which some Kashmiri insurgent groups have connections with. Granting Kashmir independence renders separatist terror elements powerless to a large extent since the cause is achieved. These are, theoretically, the benefits. In the feasibility section, we shall discuss some other factors that will impact or even negate some of the benefits.

To sum up, the benefits of the independence model are:

- It liberates India economically; it saves India economic resources and frees these resources for other crucial areas.
- It can improve India's international image, which can be a strong political card to have when bargaining with the Western powers that are keen to keep terrorism and human rights abuse checked.

4.1.2: Costs

The key argument for not selecting this solution is the potential political threat embedded in it. To India, the fear of the Kashmiri secession setting a precedent to other states that want to break away is real. The bloodshed that may arise domestically from other insurgent movements is a potentially heavy cost to pay. Even if the threats do not materialize, India does not want to be seen as being politically inept at home for caving in to pressure from a state. Moreover, giving

⁷ Asia Times reported this estimate to be about US\$2 million while CNN News estimates a much higher cost, at US\$1 million *each day*.

up Kashmir undermines the political ideology on which India's secular nationhood stands; it is tantamount to admitting India's founding principles are fallacious.

The possible loss of six major water head sources, all of which originate in or pass through Kashmir is also a frightening aspect for the survival of any country and therefore a high political-economic cost to be giving up. A debatable cost may be the lost economic opportunities between India and Pakistan. The Kashmir issue – albeit not the only cause for conflict between India and Pakistan – remains a huge thorn in the India-Pakistan relationship. Pakistan itself has consistently insisted on resolving the Kashmir issue before considering bilateral cooperation on other issues between the two countries. Removing this huge thorn seems pertinent to starting an amiable India-Pakistan relationship. Strategic Foresight group's study predicts that India and Pakistan have the potential to enjoy a trade of about US \$1 billion if the past hostile environment continues and US \$13.25 billion if peace prevails on a cumulative basis for the next five years (2004-8).⁸ The opportunity cost or loss is thus about US \$12 billion.

The Kashmiri tourism industry potentially yields a minimum of US \$ 0.9 billion a year in revenue. This, coupled with the lucrative timber industry, can give rise to significant revenue loss for India, but perhaps these economic losses are off-set by the potential economic gains outlined in 4.1.1. In the final analysis, the potential economic loss probably pales in comparison with the immense potential political losses outlined above and hence, may not even enter into the equation at all.

In summary, the costs are:

- A political-economic loss of six water sources.
- A possible loss of more states unhappy with Indian rule following Kashmir's secession and the unthinkable fragmentation of the Indian Union.
- A possible loss of revenue.

⁸ Strategic Foresight Group (SFG), *Costs of Conflict between India and Pakistan* (April 2004). This data is from SFG's website; details at: <http://strategicforesight.com/sfgnews75.htm>.

4.2 *Autonomy Model*

The two models again are:

- MODEL I: Niue/Cook Islands-New Zealand model, where Kashmir is not required to pay taxes to India but Kashmir can expect financial or economic assistance from India.
- MODEL II: Hong Kong-China model, where Kashmir will have to take full responsibility for its own finances while it makes no tax contribution to India.

The two models therefore represent two extremes in terms of the financial assistance expected from India. Model I develops a more financially dependent Kashmir while II develops a fully financially independent Kashmir.

4.2.1 Benefits

The strongest argument for selecting this option is the political benefit since India gets to keep Kashmir under the Indian flag and to keep the Indian Union “in-tact.” This option also closely mirrors the political interest of India, as discussed in 1.2. A strong political-economic benefit is keeping access to the six water sources. The economic advantage of this solution depends on the model chosen; if Model I is chosen, there is unlikely much economic benefits beyond having possibly cheaper access to the resources of Kashmir. If Model II is chosen, then India does get to keep Kashmir under the Union banner at a relatively lower economic cost than presently, since India will be absolved of the need to provide developmental financial assistance to Kashmir. Model II is almost a win-all scenario for India as it gets to both keep Kashmir and spend considerably less on it administratively; the problem is that there has always been a section of the Indian citizenry who are against according special autonomous status to Kashmir, despite this being in Article 370 of the Indian Constitution. The international community is also likely to view this solution as being politically wise and mature, thereby improving India’s international standing.

To sum up, the benefits are:

- Political integrity – keeping the Union intact.
- Access to the six water sources.

- Lower degree of financial commitment to Kashmir, thereby releasing funds for other pertinent uses and, depending on details of final pact to be drawn up, India may still stand to gain from taxes on the state.
- Improved international image.
- Possibility of purchasing essential timber and minerals at lower cost.

4.2.2 Costs

Since the final model to be chosen is open for consideration, a discussion of the costs is essentially general in nature. Model I yields costs India more to maintain while Model II can be considerably lower, since Kashmir will be essentially self-funded. While both models enable India to keep Kashmir as part of the Union, it can nevertheless set a precedent for other states to demand for autonomy, causing the same political problem as was outlined in 2.1.2.

These costs include:

- Possible loss of taxes from Kashmir.
- Financial obligation to Kashmir in terms of defense spending and other needs that arise.
- Risk of being seen as politically inept at home or domestically if this solution is not to the liking of Indians.
- Potential threat to internal security as Kashmir's autonomous status may set a precedent for other states to follow suit.

4.3 *Status Quo*

4.3.1 Benefits

This model is likely to create the opposite scenario to the independence model. The strongest benefit is thus political: keeping Kashmir as part of the Union, upholding India's political integrity and thereby setting the political tone for other states waiting to see how far India will tolerate separatist aspirations. The secondary benefit of access to economic and water resources is also crucial. The least attractive benefit may be the taxes from Kashmir. To sum up, the benefits are:

- Political stability at home.
- From a political and economic point of view, having resources is always good and desirable.
- Economic, in terms of taxes.

4.3.2 Costs

While India gets to keep Kashmir under its banner, this comes at a cost; besides the heavy economic costs to maintain a strong military force to a) protect Kashmir from Pakistan, b) to deal with a resilient Kashmiri insurgent movement and c) to manage terrorist elements within Kashmir, India has to brace itself for other possible terror attacks in other parts of India, bearing in mind that the Parliament bombing is still fairly recent. Also, since this model least mirrors Kashmiri interest, India can expect the resilient separatist elements to continue to disrupt the economic activity in Kashmir if this model is chosen. That translates into loss of revenue for India and more development funds to be pumped into Kashmir, as well as having to bear the wrath of an unhappy Kashmiri people, which can be fuel for future unrest.

To sum up, the costs are:

- High military and developmental expenditure obligation towards Kashmir.
- High political and social unrest within Kashmir and possibly within the rest of India.

4.4 *Qualitative Comparison of Models*⁹

4.4.1 Cost-Benefits and Interest Match

To recap, India's interests are:

- To uphold the political integrity of India.
- To benefit from the resources of Kashmir.

As discussed in the Interests section, Kashmir is important not only because it is the centerpiece of the bouquet and worthwhile in itself but also because the status India accords it can impact the integrity of the entire Indian Union. Congress party, which led India to independence and which is the ruling party at the moment, has always emphasized¹⁰ secularism ;

⁹ To facilitate ease of comparison, the independence model, autonomy model and status-quo model will be labeled M1, M2 and M3 respectively throughout the tables in section 4.4.

¹⁰ ICG Asia report No. 69 – “Kashmir: The View from New Delhi” writes: “Kashmir was and remains the acid test for its secular credentials. In Congress’ perception, the retention of Kashmir is linked to the future of India and is imperative, at all costs” (8) and “New Delhi has traditionally resisted conferring greater autonomy on states on the questionable grounds that this would strengthen centrifugal forces and risk pulling apart the Indian Union” (19).

Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, in his opening address at his first National Press Conference, explicitly describes his government as one that is “committed to secularism and that believes in fostering an inclusive society.” The word “inclusive” itself is instructive; politically, that can be read – albeit subtly – as an indication that India will not endorse states exiting from the Union.

Since the integrity of the Indian Union is apparently the over-arching concern of the Indian polity, this interest has to be accorded a very high percentage of above 70. Since it is unlikely that India is not interested in Kashmir’s economic and water resources – in fact its building of the Baglihar dam is cause for another disagreement with Pakistan – that has to be accorded at least a low percentage of 10. India’s interest to enhance its international image may not be explicitly articulated by the government but is observable in much of its conduct. Dr. Mattoo, Vice-Chancellor of Jammu University, notes that “New Delhi’s ambition to increase India’s influence within the international system”¹¹ is even a key factor in shaping its game-plan for resolving the Kashmir conflict, hence “Enhanced International Image” is a major perk to India, and will be accorded 10 percent instead of the 5 percent for other general perks.

The independence model, while it offers many benefits, ranks lowest amongst the three models in terms of a match with India’s interests.¹² Hence, this will be given a ranking of 1, for low responsiveness to interests. Comparing the autonomy model and the status-quo model, the latter best meets India’s interests, so it is ranked 3 and the former ranked 2. Together with the interests weightage, the results should look like this:

¹¹ Mattoo, Amitabh. “India’s “Potential” Endgame in Kashmir.” *The Kashmir Question: Retrospect and Prospect* (London ; Portland, OR : Frank Cass, 2003), 14. Dr Mattoo recognizes that while there seems to be no “publicly discernible Indian game-plan,” there have been evolving factors that can create a process that can in turn lead to a peace plan for Kashmir. An interest to increase India’s influence internationally is one. The other is the “growing consensus on economic and political decentralization.”

¹² Interest weightage is the most arbitrary. As discussed in the Interest Weightage section (3.1), perks are generally assigned a low 5%; the other interests are then pitted against each other and given a percentage that generally reflects each interest’s importance.

Table 1: Cost-benefit and Interest Comparison for India

Cost-benefits correlating with Interest	Interest Weightage	M1	M2	M3
Integrity of Indian Union	75%	1	2	3
Access to economic & water resources	10%	1	2	3
Perks				
Enhanced International Image	10%	2	3	1
Economic Savings	5%	3	2	1
Total	100%	1.2	2.1	2.7

Tentatively, Model 3 is the best option.

4.4.2 Feasibility Considerations

Economically, the independence model has mid-level viability as it liberates India to move ahead but denies it of the water and economic resources, so it is ranked 2. The autonomy model ranks strong (3) on economic viability since it allows India both economic costs reduction and potential access to economic resources. The status-quo model has low viability since it needs India to pump in money to win no new ground; it cannot buy more Kashmiri loyalty with more money and is depriving itself of other more worthwhile investments in states that have a vested loyalty interest in India.

Politically, the independence model has low viability as it is unlikely to get passed by the Indian government and citizens given their political ideology; India’s recent, softened stance should not be mistaken as a willingness to override nearly six decades of decision-making. Giving up Kashmir is tantamount to admitting failure of the India’s political ideology that Muslims can co-exist with Hindus under a secular constitution. It is a model that totally clashes with the cornerstone of India’s nation-founding principle and is a whole existential question that, if re-opened, is analogous to opening the proverbial can of worms. Hence this is clearly ranked 1. Autonomy is a strongly viable option since it will likely be supported by all the pro-Indian elements in Kashmir and it will likely find favor amongst even moderate separatist elements since it responds to the Kashmiri desire for change and self-governance. Kashmiris have been disillusioned by earlier models of “autonomy,” as India did not include them in drafting those autonomy models and even closed an eye to the corrupt behavior of earlier autonomous governments. However, India now has recognized the importance of having dialogues with the Kashmiri insurgents and has begun low-key discussions to include groups of all political

leanings. If it can a) continue dialogues with the Kashmiris and b) bring in a neutral reliable third party to lend weight to the final agreement of an autonomous model, it will be able to hear the Kashmiri needs more clearly and deal with the trust issues. Consequently, if carried out in this manner, this solution-model will have a high chance of success. Importantly, this model needs to be given a name that spells the freedom that Kashmiris desire. Lastly, the status-quo model is also feasible simply because India favors this and obviously has the will and man-power to see to it, as we have witnessed in the past decades.

Internationally, while many will be glad to see the terror elements wiped out, the international community is likely to consider the new dangers that the fractious new independent state will cause. It is likely to consider the power struggle that will come about as the different separatist groups vie for power and the internal ethno-linguistic-religious conflicts that are likely to erupt. Hence, this is low on international viability, or

1. Comparing the implications of the autonomy and status-quo model, the former will have strong international viability and the latter, mid-to-low viability. Overall, the results should look like this, with M2, or the autonomy model being the optimal solution:

Table 2: Feasibility Comparison for India

Feasibility	M1	M2	M3
Economic	2	3	1
Political	1	3	3
International	1	3	2
Total	4.0	9.0	6.0

4.4.3 Overall Evaluation

Putting together the two evaluations, the total scores put autonomy model at 11.1 while the status-quo model scores 8.7. The overall best solution for India is the autonomy model.

Table 3: Overall Evaluation of the Three Models for India

	M1	M2	M3
Total score from Table 1	1.2	2.1	2.7
Total score from Table 2	4	9	6
Total	5.2	11.1	8.7

5 The Kashmiri Perspective¹³

5.1 *Independence-Secession Model*

5.1.1 Benefits

The strongest benefit, theoretically speaking, is political; the Kashmiri separatist elements will perceive this as the answer to their political aspiration. This model promises political freedom, in itself a huge benefit. This model also means Kashmiris have control over their own economic resources, another plus. To sum up, the benefits are:

- Political freedom.
- Control over economic resources.

5.1.2 Costs

Those benefits however come at a huge cost. With India totally out of the picture, Kashmir will have to fund itself fully on all governmental, administrative, social and military expenses. It will lose defense protection from India and be put in a vulnerable position. For a

¹³ The Kashmiri perspective is almost a reverse-image of the costs and benefits to those discussed in the India section, hence, many of the arguments here are presented more succinctly.

start, there is no guarantee that Pakistan will not attack an independent Kashmir.¹⁴ With a powerful China to the north that has illegally occupied Aksai Chin – 19 percent of Kashmir – since 1962, Kashmir has to factor in the costs of protecting itself against China too. In the dream case scenario that neither Pakistan nor China harbors designs on Kashmir, it has to deal with a strong sense of displacement for those who never wanted to be independent from India. Kashmir has to be ready for consequent possible civil unrest or another exodus like the one upon the partition of India and Pakistan in 1947. The violence that ensued during that exodus is certainly a high price to pay. In summary, the costs are:

- Huge economic investments.
- Huge political insecurity.

5.2 *Autonomy Model*

5.2.1 Benefits

This presents an almost win-all situation for Kashmir, for Kashmir can get protection and monetary aid to run its own show, without even paying taxes, unless it takes the Hong Kong model where it needs to fund itself fully on all administrative costs. The Kashmir economy can even take advantage of trade links or ties that India builds with other countries. Importantly, this model allows Kashmir to say good-bye to five decades of tyrannical and/or corrupt Indian rule.

In short, this model allows Kashmir to:

- Benefit from financial aid from India.
- Relieve itself of defense budget.
- Realize political interest for freedom.

5.2.2 Costs

The only cost that Kashmir needs to pay for this solution seems to be giving up an extreme definition of *Azaadi*, or freedom. The other related cost is that Kashmir is not able to represent itself on international fronts.

¹⁴ When asked if Pakistan's involvement is or is not sincere and based on genuine concern for Kashmiris, 68 percent said it is NOT and 59 percent feel that its involvement is based on territorial ambition. Data from MORI poll; see note 16 for details on the poll.

5.3 *Status Quo*

5.3.1 Benefits

The only benefit of this model seems to be the certainty of military protection from Pakistan and China, especially for those who have pro-India leanings.

5.3.2 Costs

This model presents a very high cost for Kashmir. Past Kashmiri governments endorsed by the Indian central governments were corrupt, exploited the timber resource of the state and often acted in the interests of the central government. There is no guarantee that future Kashmiri governments backed by the Indian central government will definitely act in the interests of the Kashmiris. Furthermore, the Kashmir economy will continue to be wrecked by pro-independence and pro-Pakistan movements. This model also requires Kashmiris to totally give up their independence aspirations, a cost that some Kashmiris refuse to bear.

5.4 *Qualitative Comparison of Models*

5.4.1 Cost-Benefits and Interest Match

To recap, Kashmir's interests are to have:

- Peace restored, so that normalcy can return.
- A revived economy and jobs.
- *Azaadi*, which means freedom, but that can also mean self-determination.

The independence model (M1) has the least likelihood of realizing interests one and two above but has high correlation with the last interest. The autonomy model (M2), in comparison, has high correlation with interests one and two but mid correlation with interest three. The status-quo model (M3) has low correlation with peace and *azaadi* but a somewhat better potential than the independence model in bringing about a revived economy, so it is ranked 2 on the last interest and 1 for the other interests.

To understand how Kashmiris may weigh the three interests, the MORI poll¹⁵ conducted in 2002 to discern Kashmiri political aspirations has to be considered here. When asked to pick all the proposals they feel would bring peace to IJK, an overwhelming 93 percent indicated that economic development of the region to provide more job opportunities and a reduction in poverty will help; 86 percent felt an end to militant violence is essential; 86 percent felt the holding of free and fair elections to elect the people's representatives is necessary and 87 percent wanted direct consultation between the Indian government and the people of Kashmir. The main concerns then seem to be ending violence to restore normalcy, reviving the economy of Kashmir and realizing true democracy in Kashmir, all of which are directly related to the three interests spelt out earlier. Since all three interests seem about as important as each other in the survey – the percentages are all in the upper eighties and above – they will be accorded equal weightage in the calculation. The overall results are:

Table 4: Cost-benefit and Interest Comparison for Kashmir

Interest	Weightage	M1	M2	M3
Peace and normalcy restored	30%	1	3	1
Revived economy and jobs	30%	1	3	2
Freedom/self-governance	30%	3	2	1
Perks				
Financial aid from India	5%	1	2	3
Protection from India	5%	1	2	3
Total	100%	1 6	2 6	1 5

The autonomy model is the best option in terms of cost-benefit and interests consideration.

¹⁵ Market and Opinion Research International (MORI), a British group, conducted a poll of 850 adults in 55 localities in Jammu and Kashmir in 2002. The sample selected reflected the percentages of the religious makeup of IJK. The polling was commissioned by Lord Avebury, former head of the British Parliament's human rights committee. More details of the poll can be accessed at <http://www.mori.com/polls/2002/kashmir.shtml>. The seemingly only other poll done in Kashmir was conducted by Outlook magazine in 1995 and was only limited to some areas of the Kashmir Valley.

5.4.2 Feasibility Considerations

The political viability of M1 is extremely low. The first political obstacle is India. The likelihood that India will totally give up IJK after nearly sixty years of heavy investment is near zero.

In the unlikely event that India does grant Kashmir freedom, the following implementation scenarios have to be considered. Firstly, the popular chant in Kashmir to free the entire former princely state has more bark than bite because this movement for independence of the entire state is mainly spearheaded and sustained only by the Kashmiris of the Kashmir Valley. They argue that the state was formerly an independent princely state, is geographically larger than at least sixty-eight countries of the United Nations and more populous than ninety, and most likely believe that their political agenda represents the whole of Jammu and Kashmir. However, a reality check reminds us that not all Muslims in Kashmir have separatist leanings, not to mention Hindus and Buddhists, most of whom are still keen to be part of India. As discussed in the Interests section, only about 50 percent of the population or less want independence. The findings of the MORI survey seem to point to this too: on the issue of citizenship, 61 percent said they felt they would be better off politically and economically as an Indian citizen and only 6 percent think it would be better to be a Pakistani citizen. Simply put, there may just not be sufficient support for the independence agenda, not to mention the will to see it through.

Secondly, even if all Kashmiris agree with the independence agenda, there is the huge administrative issue of how to devolve power in a way acceptable to all the three religious groups. Although there has been talk among some Kashmiris with high ideals about realizing a Kashmir with a secular constitution, experts have pointed out time and again that Kashmiri ethnic identity and political mobilization are so closely aligned with religious lines that a secular Kashmir is doomed to fail before it is born.

Kashmir has to also deal with possible social unrest that can arise due to the varied ethno-linguistic-religious nature of Kashmir. For a start, the Muslims in Kashmir are from many different ethno-linguistic groups that do not necessarily agree with each other just because of the

common religious factor. A “simple” solution of re-dividing the state into zones along ethno-linguistic lines can be complex; for example, Muslims are found in fairly distinct pockets but the areas are not contiguous. This “simple” solution recalls the mass-movement of Hindus and Muslims when India and Pakistan split and could cause Kashmir to splinter into pieces, complete with bloodshed and refugee flows.

At the end of the day, the question of whether Kashmiri insurgent groups can lead credibly is still unanswered. Hence, overall, the political viability of this solution-model is really low. Sadly, this romantic ideal of a free Kashmir, while beautiful, is not realistically going to lead to the best outcome.

In comparison, M2 can be a really strong choice, not only for the military protection against China, but also because of the pro-India elements of Kashmir – which is about 50 percent – registered in two of the three key areas in IJK: Jammu and Ladakh. This choice is likely to win acceptance from the pro-India elements, since it respects and works with their sentiments. For them, this choice perhaps has a “check” function since India will still be “big-brother”; this choice probably assures them as it leaves recourse for redress of inequality of power distribution. In the MORI survey, 55 percent of the interviewees supported the proposal that the governments of India and Pakistan grant maximum autonomy to both sides of Kashmir to govern their own affairs. Hence an autonomy model is likely to find great currency among the Kashmiris, despite the central government’s failure in earlier years to deliver the autonomy they were promised.

M2 also has room to accommodate the call for self-determination of most of the separatist groups, since all administrative, executive and legislative powers can be handed over to Kashmir. Overall then, for the stability that this model can provide, especially in comparison with the independence model, it ranks high on political viability.

M3 is clearly a weak choice. Even though there may be structural changes to the present system, it is too far from the ideal of the separatist and/or freedom-seeking elements to be accepted. Even if they were to accept it grudgingly or India can think of enough incentives to attract them to this option for the moment, it will be a matter of time before the freedom-disease virus spreads again. This solution does not “cure” the disease but merely suppresses its symptoms and delays the symptom manifestation.

Although there is less than 50 percent of Kashmiris who want independence, they are powerful enough to disrupt the lives of all in the state, as we have seen in the past years; innocent

individuals have gotten implicated and were subjected to abusive treatment from counter-insurgency operations. Basically, this option delivers a result that we have already witnessed and know is unsatisfactory.

Economically, Kashmir likes to think that with its strong billion dollar tourism industry and its lucrative timber and other resource-based industries, it can survive independently. But a reality check points out that it is landlocked by India, Pakistan and China, all of whom are working hard to earn a slice of the world market and certainly will not be granting Kashmir special preferential status. This is a prospect that has to be seriously considered. Hence M1 is ranked low. M2 poses strong economic viability for Kashmir, since there is room in this model for Kashmir to continue to rely on India financially and even take advantage of India's economic ties with its trade partners. In a world where membership to free-trade agreements clubs is key to survival, Kashmir wants to check on its ability to get into that multi-billion dollar club and not merely think of self-sufficiency. Decades ago, it might have had a better chance of succeeding economically on its own. Compared to the independence model, M2 has so much higher chances of economic viability. Economically, M3 is the option that least works since it hurts both the Kashmiri and Indian economy. As this option will not work well politically, we can expect continued instability, which of course wrecks Kashmir's economy, particularly its tourism industry, which also happens to be the life-line of Kashmir. Investors will obviously not find a Kashmir in conflict attractive. Hence, economic viability is low.

In view of the likely regional instability that an independent Kashmir can cause as discussed in the political viability section above, M1 is not likely to be supported by the international community. Internationally, M2 is most likely to be supported, both for the short-term benefit of bringing back normalcy and the long-term benefit of stability to the region. Also, it is the model that best gives voice to the dream of freedom. This has the strongest international viability of the three models. M3 does not present an outcome that the world likes to see and therefore lacks support and viability. The results are presented in Table 5 below.

Table 5: Feasibility Comparison for Kashmir

Feasibility	M1	M2	M3
Economic	1	3	1
Political	1	3	1
International	1	3	2
Total	3.0	9.0	4.0

5.4.3 Overall Evaluation

Overall, the autonomy model is the best model for Kashmir to adopt, as presented in Table 6. The autonomy model is consistently the optimal solution for Kashmir in both the cost-benefit-interest analysis and the feasibility analysis.

Table 6: Overall Evaluation of the Three Models for Kashmir

	M1	M2	M3
Total score from Table 4	1.6	2.6	1.5
Total score from Table 5	3	9	4
Total	4.6	11.6	5.5

6 Recommendation

In view of the interests, cost and benefits and feasibility considerations of both IJK and India, the Autonomy solution-model has the highest chance of success. It is recommended that India and Kashmir pick this model to resolve the conflict.

7 Conclusion

India and Kashmir has each been made to pay a high price for their romantic conceptions: India for its glorified ideal of a unified, secular India, of which Kashmir is a showcase, a microcosm of the larger India due to its unique mix of religious groups; Kashmir, for its romanticized concepts of freedom, made popular already since 1940s, then made desirable and necessary due to the corrupt state government that India allowed to happen. Fortunately, the autonomous model allows fertile ground on which both the self-determination desire of the Kashmiris and the political integrity of India can thrive.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Articles and journals:

- Baker, Mark. "The Sorrow of War in Kashmir." *The Age*, Melbourne, Australia, June 4 2002. Reprinted in *World Press Review* Vol. 49, No. 9. August 2002 Available from http://www.worldpress.org/article_model.cfm?article_id=725&dont=yes
- Cohn, M. R. "Kashmir: Separatism with a Twist" *The Toronto Star*, Canada, Oct 7 2002. Reprinted in *World Press Review* Vol. 49, No. 12. December 2002 Available from http://www.worldpress.org/article_model.cfm?article_id=912&dont=yes
- Foster, Peter. "Musharraf seeks 'change of status' for Kashmir." *Telegraph News*, 27/10/2004. Available from <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/main.jhtml?xml=/news/2004/10/27/wkash27.xml&Sheet=/news/2004/10/27/ixnewstop.html>; Internet; accessed 20 December 2004.
- Ganguly, Sumit. "Explaining the Kashmir Insurgency: Political Mobilization and Institutional Decay." Reprinted in *International Security*, Vol. 21, No.2. Autumn, 1996.
- Mattoo, Amitabh. "India's "Potential" Endgame in Kashmir." *The Kashmir Question: Retrospect and Prospect*. London ; Portland, OR : Frank Cass, 2003.
- Habibullah, Wajahat. "The Political Economy of the Kashmir Conflict: Opportunities for Economic Peacebuilding and for U.S. Policy." USIP Special Report 121, June 2004. Available from <http://www.usip.org/pubs/specialreports/sr121.html>; Internet; accessed 2 September 2004.
- International Crisis Group. "Kashmir: The View From New Delhi." ICG Asia Report N°69, 4 December 2003. Available from <http://www.icg.org/home/index.cfm?id=2408&l=1>; Internet; accessed 10 October 2004.
- International Crisis Group. "India/Pakistan Relations and Kashmir: Steps toward Peace." ICG Asia Report N°79, June 2004. Available from <http://www.icg.org/home/index.cfm?id=2825&l=1>; Internet; accessed 2 September 2004.
- Jaleel, M. "A Guide to Kashmir Peace Plans." Kashmir Human Rights Site, January 2002. Available from <http://www.kashmir-hr.net/mainfilr.php/articles/28/>; Internet; accessed 9 September 2004.
- Kashmir Study Group. "Kashmir: A Way Forward." Livingston Report, February 2000. Available from <http://www.kashmirstudygroup.net/>; Internet; accessed 15 October 2004.

Market and Opinion Research International (MORI). Poll Report “Kashmiris Reject War In Favor Of Democratic Means.” 31 May 2002. Available from <http://www.mori.com/polls/2002/kashmir.shtml>; Internet; accessed 28 December 2004.

Sokol, K. A. “From Cantonments To Cantons – A Modest Proposal for Kashmir.” The Forum of Democratic Leaders in the Asia-Pacific Quarterly archives, May 1999. Available from <http://www.nancho.net/fdla/kashmir/hapkash.html>; Internet; accessed 5 September 2004

Books:

Bose, Sumantra. *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace*. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2003.

Crocker, A. C., Hampson F. O. and Aall, P. eds. *Turbulent Peace: The Challenges of Managing International Conflict*. Washington: USIP, 2001

Fisher Roger and Ury William *Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without giving in*. New York: Penguin, 1981

Strategic Foresight Group (SFG). *Cost of Conflict between India and Pakistan*. Apr 2004. Highlights of study available from the SFG website. <http://strategicforesight.com/sfgnews88.htm>. Accessed on 10 September 2004

Malik, I. *Kashmir: Ethnic Conflict, International Dispute*. Pakistan: Oxford University Press, 2002

Kumar, Chetan. “Sources of and Responses to Violent Conflict in South Asia.” *Ethnic Conflict: Religion, Identity and Politics*. Giannakos S.A. ed. Ohio: Ohio University Press 2002

Wirsing, Robert G. “The Autonomy Puzzle: Territorial Solutions to the Kashmir Conflict.” *Democracy and Ethnic Conflict: Advancing Peace in Deeply Divided Societies*. Adrain Geulke ed. New York: Palgrave Macmillian 2004

Governmental websites:

Azad Kashmir: The Official Website. <http://www.ajk.gov.pk> Accessed 6 September 2004

The Official Website of Jammu and Kashmir Government, India. <http://jammukashmir.nic.in/welcome.html> Accessed 6 September 2004

The Prime Minister’s Office <http://pmindia.nic.in/> Accessed 6 September 2004

News websites:

BBC News <http://news.bbc.co.uk/>

CNN News <http://www.cnn.com/>

The Economist <http://www.economist.com/>

Asia Times <http://www.atimes.com/>