

CURRENT AFFAIRS.

Question

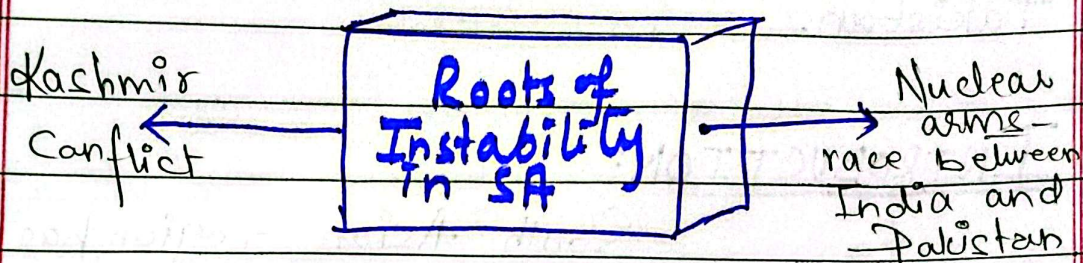
Discuss the prospects of peace in South Asia with reference to Kashmir conflict and Nuclear Arms-race between India and Pakistan.

INTRODUCTION:

South Asian region has long history of instability and grievances. However, Kashmir conflict had been serving as a core threat to its peace since 1947. This conflict had driven three full-scale wars and nuclear-arms race between India and Pakistan. Resultantly, stability of South Asia had remained at stake. The unresolved Kashmir issue limits the prospect of peace in South Asia by serving as a catalyst to strategic instability, water weaponization and organizational paralysis. Alongside, nuclear arms-race among hostile neighbours is a threat to peace in South Asia in the terms of economy, society and spill over risks. Therefore, immediate

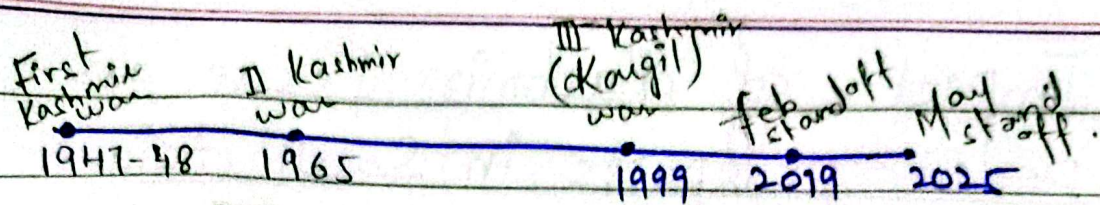
mutual dialogues and long-term binding solution is crucial to ensure peace in South Asia.

A. Roots of Instability in South Asia



A1- Unresolved Kashmir Conflict: A Driver of Instability in SA

The roots of Kashmir cause originate from the legacy of colonial master of sub-continent. India and Pakistan had stood eyeball to eyeball upon the claim of Kashmir. However, non-binding resolution of UN and lack of political will on bilateral solutions led to the major wars in last century and left Kashmir as an unresolved conflict. However, its soreness can be felt in May 2025 stand off of Pakistan and India. It indicates that Kashmir conflict is the core threat to peace of South Asia.



Timeline of conflicts/wars over Kashmir.

A2 - Kashmir Conflict as catalyst for Nuclear Arms-race between India and Pakistan

The Kashmir-centric hostility betw. led to the realist security dilemma upon India's nuclear development in 1974. Resultantly, the nuclear arms-race began and Pakistan achieved nuclear power status in 1998 to maintain the deterrence in the region. However, the peace of South Asia became more vulnerable under this nuclear threat.

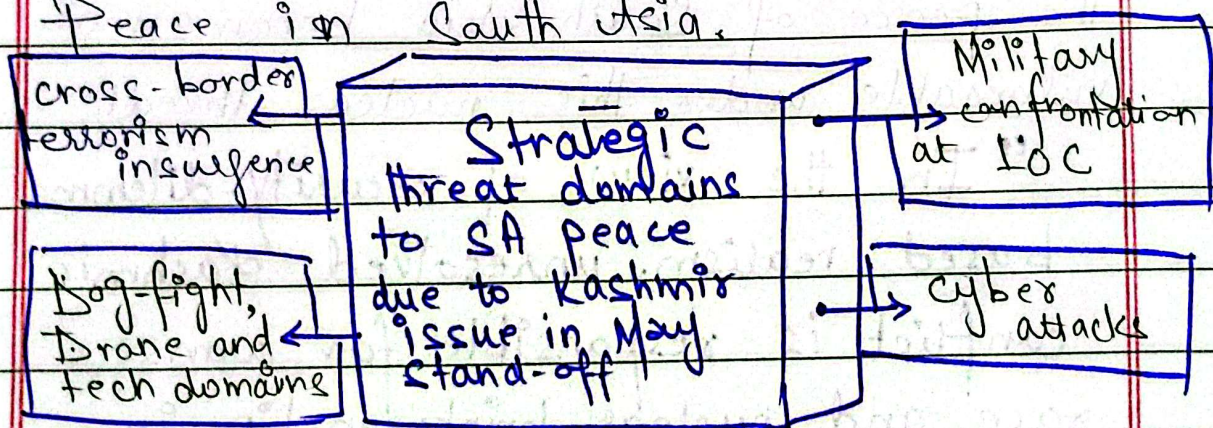
"In the view of security-dilemma based realism, unresolved Kashmir conflict is responsible for arms race and nuclear brinkmanship in India and Pakistan."

Ref: An Analysis of the Kashmir Issue: Past, Present and Future Recommendations by Yunus Khan.

B- Impact of Kashmir Issue on peace prospects in South Asia

B1- Strategic instability limits the peace in region:

Kashmir conflict bring both nations at brink of war. The Pahalgam attack in Kashmir followed by four days May stand-off between India and Pakistan is an example. The imminent threat of nuclear escalation further destabilize the region. Therefore, resolution of Kashmir issue is necessary to ensure Peace in South Asia.



Ref: Dawn Editorial (May, 2025)

B2- Kashmir is the primary location of water weaponization in South Asia.

Prevailing trend of hydroelectric energy and hostility of India and Pakistan over water has turned it into a weapon. Kashmir is the location responsible for the route of rivers in India and Pakistan. Therefore, any aggression for water or Kashmir can cause a war in South Asia, further enhancing its grievances.

Pahalgam
Attack, 2025 in
Kashmir



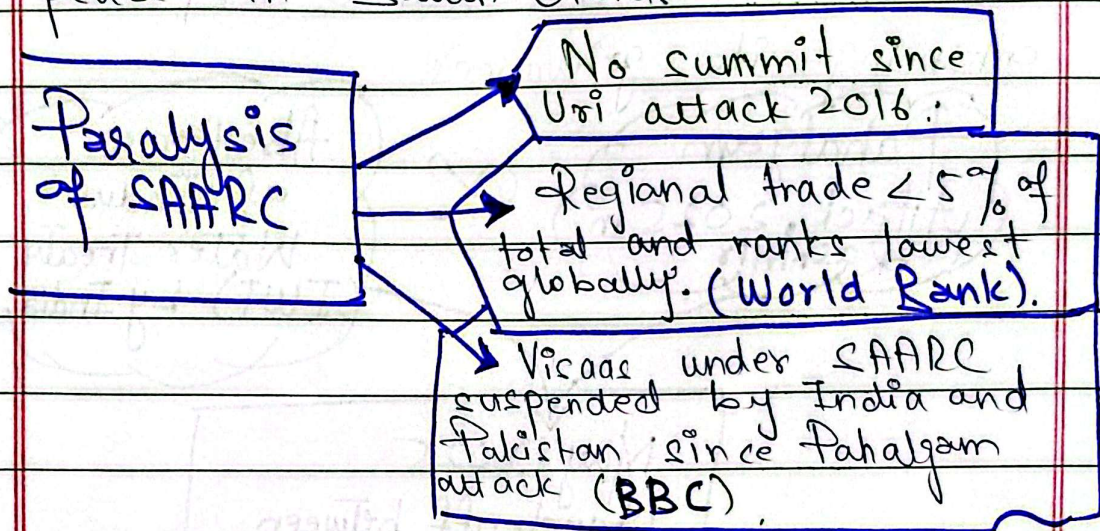
Abeysance
of Indus
Water Treaty
(IWT) by India

May 2025
Stand-off between
India and Pakistan

B3- Kashmir conflict leads to the organizational paralysis further undermining peace in South Asia.

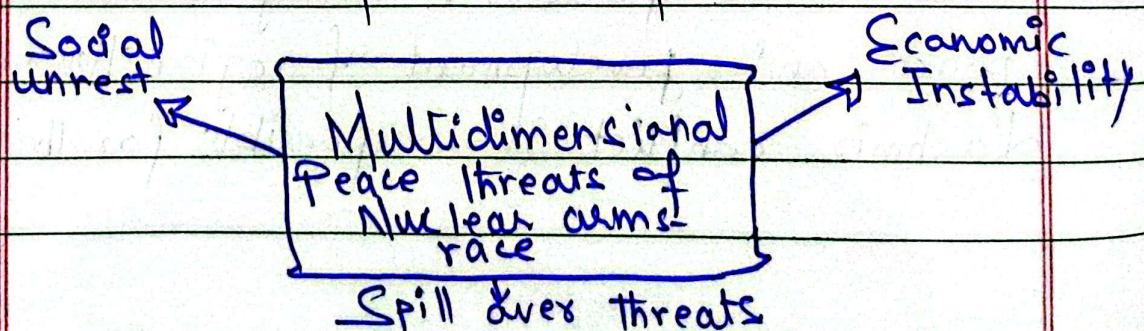
Regional platforms are the major source of conflict resolution and bilateral cooperation, leading to the peace and development of region. However, Kashmir conflict is responsible for the

Paralysis of South Asia's major organisation called SAARC. India does not support solving the Kashmir issue through SAARC under the conditions of Simla Agreement 1972. Resultantly, neither the conflict resolved nor the SAARC flourished to ensure peace in South Asia.



C- Nuclear Arms-Race between India and Pakistan challenges any prospect of peace in South Asia.

Strategic threats of nuclear-arms race are inevitable. However, threats to peace are not limited to a single dimension, depicted as follows.



C1- Economic Instability in South Asia due to nuclear arms-race between hostile neighbours

Both countries invest a large portion of economy on military spending, particularly nuclear arms-race. It results in the economic deprivation of region. It ultimately leads to the social instability and vulnerability of region for foreign attacks.

“According to International Campaign to Abolish Nuclear Weapons (ICANW), India and Pakistan spent \$2.7 bn and \$1 bn on nuclear weapons in 2023”

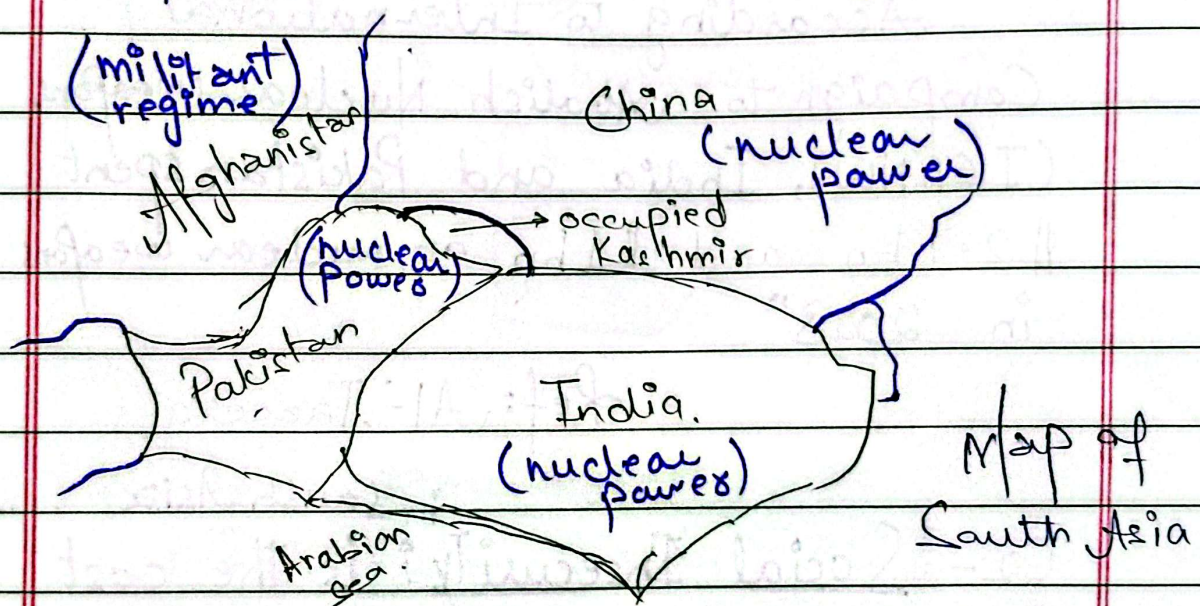
Ref: Al-Jazeera

C2- Social Insecurity^{in South Asia} is the cost of nuclear arms-race

Wars, economic deprivation and hostility between neighbours ultimately lead to the social insecurity in region. According to UN OHCHR, Youth in Kashmir is radicalized by repression. On the other hand,

Pakistan and India ranks at 168th and 99th out of 193 countries on human development index. It indicates that society is facing unrest and deprivation due to nuclear spending and unresolved Kashmir agenda.

C3 - Nuclear arms-race for Kashmir Conflict enhances the risk for Spillover in wider region:

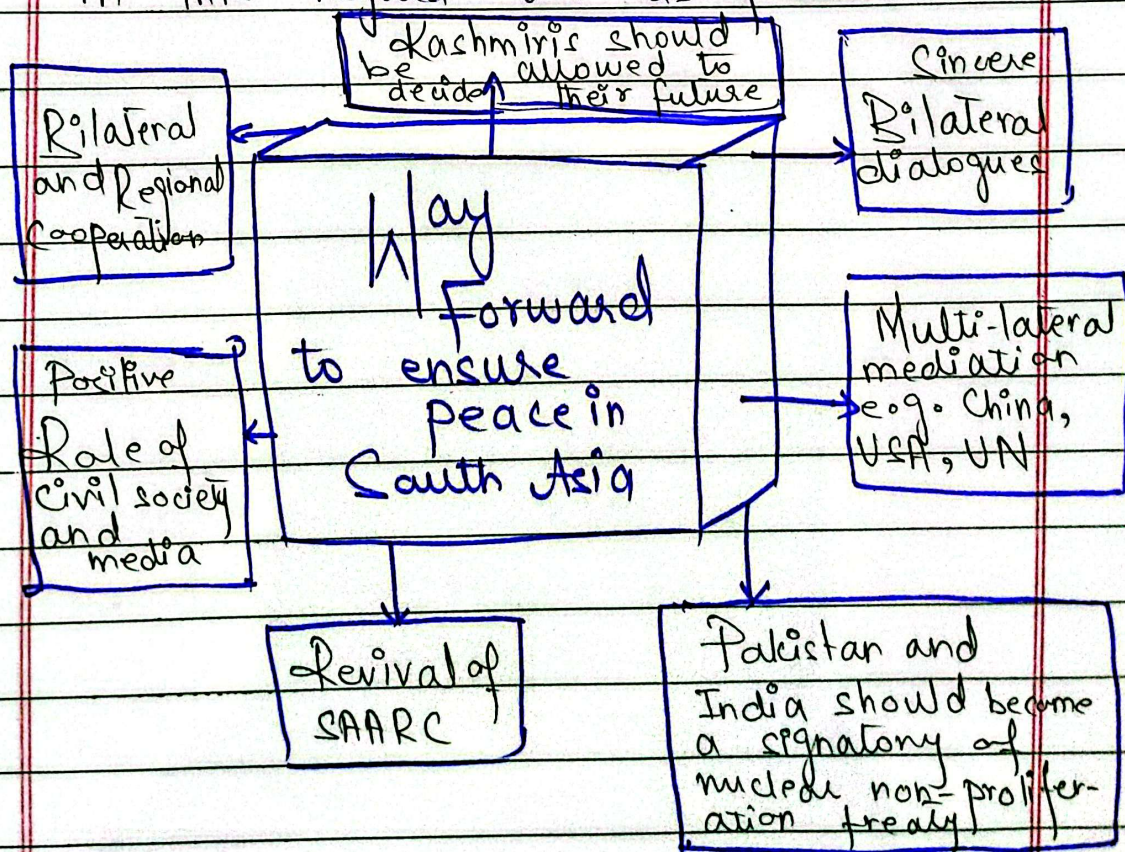


Kashmir region is land locked by 3 nuclear power: India, Pakistan and China. Alongside, Afghanistan is present with its militant and war trained regime, known for militant insurgencies and cross-border terrorism. So, the ^{slight} aggression can lead to

the destruction of entire region in multi-dimensions including, nuclear radioactive destruction of masses, infrastructure, environment and many more.

D- Way Forward to ensure peace in South Asia in the context of Kashmir conflict and nuclear arms-race between India and Pakistan.

To ensure peace in South Asia, multi-dimensional approach is required to solve Kashmir conflict and nuclearization threat. A few measures in this regard are as follows:



Conclusion:

Kashmir conflict and nuclear arms-race between India and Pakistan limits the prospects of peace in South Asia. They are the major drivers of strategic tensions, water politics, and economic deprivation in region. Alongside, they enhances social instability and risk of wider tensions in South Asia.

Therefore, serious measures are required to resolve Kashmir conflict and bind the nuclear proliferation of both countries to ensure peace in South Asia.