

Source A

In most troubled areas of the world, there are perhaps a half a dozen militant groups at most. In Kashmir there are dozens. The withdrawal of the Soviet Union from Afghanistan in 1989 left a large number of mujahideen fighters in search of a new cause, and many came to Kashmir to wage jihad, or holy war. Other Islamic groups came from Pakistan. As well as separatist groups such as the Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front, there are hard-line Islamic terrorist groups such as Lashkar-e-Taiba.

Source B

The dispute over Kashmir has been managed more effectively since 1999, although important problems remain. In terms of India's internal policy there are some grounds for optimism, as a degree of normality has returned to Kashmir. Relatively free and fair elections to the state government were held in 2002 and again in 2008, and so there is an important element of civilian administration and politics without recourse to violence. War weariness on the part of the population of Kashmir has weakened support for the insurgency, even though there are still political groups that seek independence or to join Pakistan. Pakistan has taken some steps to curb support for Kashmiri militants, and former President Musharraf indicated that Pakistan would not press for redrawn boundaries.

Source C**Sporting links:**

In 2004 India played cricket against Pakistan for the first time in years. Thousands of Indians were given visas to attend the match in Pakistan, making this the most significant people-to-people contact between Indians and Pakistanis since the peace process had begun. During the match, Indians who were interviewed said that they had been greeted like long-lost brothers: shopkeepers would not accept payments, taxi drivers had declined fares and even hotels were not charging. People kept approaching them with gifts. Even when India won, they received an ovation from the Pakistani crowd.

Transport links:

In 2005 a bus service opened across the ceasefire line between Srinagar in Indian controlled Kashmir and Muzaffarabad on the Pakistan side. The bus only runs fortnightly and seats are limited. However, as cross-border journeys increase, people are beginning to make friends and find their families in both countries. In order for the bus to run, Indian and Pakistani soldiers had to work together to clear mines and rebuild a damaged bridge.

Local Politics:

In January 2005 local elections were held in Jammu and Kashmir for the first time in more than twenty years. The turnout was nearly 60%, despite intimidating threats by terrorists and the assassination of some candidates. Those who voted wanted new roads, clean water and better sanitation. A shopkeeper in the town of Sopore, a stronghold of Pakistani militants, stated that they could not wait for civic amenities until independence: they were needed now.

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