

My Kashmir: Conflict and the Prospects for Enduring Peace

Wajahat Habibullah

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The picturesque Indian state of Jammu and Kashmir, for centuries a model of harmony and coexistence, has been ravaged by conflict for sixty years, caught in a tug-of-war between historical rivals India and Pakistan. Now that both nations are nuclear powers, some see the Kashmir issue as a flash point for what could become a nuclear war.

In *My Kashmir*, Wajahat Habibullah lays out the intricate web of issues at the root of the conflict: ethnicity, religion, national identity, friction between national and local government, and territory. In an account that is equal parts history and memoir, he examines the complicating factors: the Indian government s missteps, the greed of the entrenched Kashmiri middle-class elites, and religious politics and their all-too-familiar polarizing consequences. Unlike many others who have written on the subject, Habibullah gives evenhanded treatment to both Indian and Pakistani perspectives, though he rightly keeps the Kashmiri people themselves at center stage, for their needs and desires will be pivotal to any real solution. Now, he says, despite the history of bloodshed and betrayals, the possibility for lasting peace is greater than ever before.

Wajahat Habibullah has spent much of his long and distinguished career in the Indian Administrative Service working in Kashmir. His insightful account carries the authority of someone who has been in the thick of the actions and political maneuverings, dealing directly with the players amid the most wrenching turmoil. Being both Indian and Muslim, insider and outsider, has enabled him to feel and understand the competing loyalties and emotions that are inextricably part of Kashmir.



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