HOUSE OF COMMONS

Foreign Affairs Committee

Oral evidence: Implementing the Integrated Review: Tilt to the Indo-Pacific, HC 172

Tuesday 10 January 2023

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Watch the meeting

Members present: Alicia Kearns (Chair); Saqib Bhatti; Sir Chris Bryant; Liam Byrne; Neil Coyle; Drew Hendry; Bob Seely; Henry Smith; Royston Smith; Graham Stringer.

Questions 194-220

Witnesses

II: Walter Ladwig III, Senior Lecturer in International Relations at King's College London, Garima Mohan, Senior Fellow at The German Marshall Fund of the United States, Aman Hingorani, Lawyer and mediator at the Supreme Court of India, and Mosharraf Zaidi, Journalist and CEO at Tabadlab.

Examination of witnesses

Witnesses: Walter Ladwig III, Garima Mohan, Aman Hingorani and Mosharraf Zaidi.

Q194 **Chair:** Welcome back to this session of the Foreign Affairs Committee. I am very grateful to you all for giving evidence. I would be grateful if everyone could introduce themselves very briefly. We will be joined at a later point by somebody remotely, but because of our roaming times, they are not quite here yet. Mr Zaidi, would you like to start?

Mosharraf Zaidi: I am Mosharraf Zaidi. I live and work in Pakistan. I work for a think-tank and an advisory services firm called Tabadlab. Tabadlab is a mix between trying to study the process of change and trying to be experimental. We look at global and local public policy issues, and of course this issue is of vital concern to us, so I am delighted to have the opportunity to be here.

Walter Ladwig: I am Walter Ladwig. I am a senior lecturer in international relations at King's College, an associate fellow with the Indo-Pacific programme at RUSI, and the academic lead for south Asia education programmes for the FCDO's diplomatic academy.

Garima Mohan: I am Garima Mohan. I am a senior fellow with the German Marshall Fund of the United States, which is a transatlantic organisation. I work in the Asia programme, where I am the lead for India. My research focuses on Indian foreign policy towards Europe as it has developed over the last decade.

Chair: I recognise that all foreign policy is very intricate, but we will try to do this as much as possible in a quick-fire, rapid-fire way, so we get through everything we can. We are desperately keen to hear your views.

Q195 **Drew Hendry:** Perhaps I will start with Dr Mohan, before going along the panel. In your view, what tensions exist in the UK-India relationship?

Garima Mohan: With Europe and India in general, but the UK and India in particular, I think there have been legacy issues, which I am sure Members here are well aware of. I would stress that, in addition to the frictions that have existed in the past to do with the diaspora, trade and international politics—where India faces what it sees as priorities and ambitions versus what Europe sees—we see a lot more convergence now with India and the UK. I have been looking at Indian foreign policy as it has evolved towards Europe for a long time. I have to say that the amount of political will, leadership and diplomatic capacity that India is now investing in the UK relationship, as well as in other relationships with European countries, is unprecedented in the short term. In New Delhi, there has been a lot of attention on figuring out where exactly the UK and the rest of Europe fit into India's broader vision.

The tilt toward the Indo-Pacific therefore was very welcome, as was the start of the FTA negotiations. In general for India, the goal is to develop its national capacities and resilience—for example, when it comes to new

technologies; new forms of partnership; more investment in its neighbourhood, whether in connectivity projects or security; and the presence of the UK Navy. All these things add to and eclipse the tensions that have existed in the past.

Q196 **Drew Hendry:** What is the defence relationship like?

Garima Mohan: The defence relationship was stagnant for a long time, but it has been picking up steam for the last maybe two or three years. We have heard about negotiations of logistics agreements. When the carrier strike group transited through the Indo-Pacific, that led to more opportunities for interaction—UK Navy liaison officers being present in the Indian Ocean, in the India maritime domain awareness programme. So there has been a lot of interaction at the navy-to-navy level, as well as at the diplomatic level. I was in New Delhi in December. I was talking to the high commission staff there and, frankly, they were saying there has been a lot of activity of a kind they have not seen in the recent past.

Also, India has an Indo-Pacific oceans initiative. The maritime leg is being headed by the UK, which opens up possibilities to do much more with India.

Walter Ladwig: In the interests of time, I would agree with what has been said previously. In short, the UK is seen, particularly by the present Government, as a source of opportunities. There are some legacy issues surrounding diaspora groups in the country. There are, of course, always issues on trade that are difficult, particularly given India's position that movement of goods and people should be linked, which is not always agreed to by partners in the west.

One of the key things that India sees in the UK is an opportunity to develop and strengthen itself. There are positive, mutually beneficial economic benefits to be gained, access to technology that could be—

Q197 **Drew Hendry:** My question was specifically about tensions. I am really keen to know about that.

Walter Ladwig: Tensions have largely been legacied. Going forward, there is not that perception so much, but tensions would surround perceptions—historical perceptions—that the UK Government was closer to Pakistan than to India. Some of that comes from a perception that, because of the populations that settled in certain constituencies around Bradford, somehow Parliament is in the pocket of a certain country, or because someone gives a speech in the Houses of Parliament, that reflects UK policy.

There has been increased understanding about the boisterous nature of both countries' democracies. I see that on a regular basis; King's College is right across from the Indian high commission, and I have walked out and seen a bunch of buses that were rented by some folks representing Khalistani groups who were circling the high commission, chanting and playing songs. Those kinds of things are really upsetting to Indian

diplomats—they might be part of political life in the UK—but understanding and appreciation of that has improved on both sides.

Mosharraf Zaidi: I think there are a lot of tensions. Some of them are very obvious and explicit, and others are coming up the road. All of those are anchored in one particular legacy issue between India and the United Kingdom indirectly, which is of course the issue of Kashmir. Anything bad that happens in the south and central Asia region can ultimately, either through a dotted line or a direct straight line, be linked to the issue of Kashmir.

Until the UK Government, friends in the UK Parliament and the great people of this country being represented by them engage directly and frontally with the issue of Kashmir, a lot of the amazing potential of India-UK relations—and there is an amazing set of potentialities. That is obvious, with India's population and its size, but also with its culture and so much of what it already contributes to the UK and to the rest of the world. The story of India-UK relations, like relations between India and any country, should be one that is only positive.

In the case of the UK, in particular, there is a bleeding sore. Its name is Kashmir. The Indian occupation of Kashmir is the source of that set of multiple problems. As we go on, I can go into more detail as to what those problems are and what risk that portends for the tilt to the Indo-Pacific. However, in terms of the three things that the tilt to the Indo-Pacific seeks to do—to enhance economic opportunity, to improve UK security and to ensure that the UK's values are well represented in its most vital relationships—the most vital foreign policy relationship that the UK might have with any country might be the UK relationship with India.

That makes it all the more important that this very important issue is tackled head on and addressed. That does not mean that it should be addressed to my satisfaction as a Pakistani—far from it—but it should be addressed to the satisfaction of the UK's interests, as articulated in the integrated review and the tilt to the Indo-Pacific.

Q198 **Chair:** Dr Mohan, do you want to come back on that?

Garima Mohan: Not really. I agree that this is a point of tension and contention in the India-UK relationship, but I don't see that being important from the Indian perspective. I am from New Delhi. I go there quite often for research. Kashmir and the Pakistan relationship do not figure prominently in India's Indo-Pacific strategy. China is the bigger threat. That is the conversation they would like to have.

Q199 **Liam Byrne:** Interesting. I have two questions. In 2018, Michelle Bachelet said that "the human rights situation has not been followed up with meaningful improvements, or even open and serious discussions on how the grave issues raised could be addressed." Dominic Raab told the House of Commons on 3 September 2019: "The issue of human rights is not just a bilateral, or domestic, issue for India and Pakistan; it is an international issue." Mark Field, then a Foreign Officer Minister, followed

up by saying that he was deeply concerned about the reports of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, saying that they would be raised in international committees. Should the UK be doing an awful lot more, Mr Zaidi, to raise the issue of human rights abuses in Kashmir?

Mosharraf Zaidi: Without question. To caveat that, I would say that that is not, again, an India-specific thing, because I understand Indian sensitivities on this. I think there are lots of human rights issues in Pakistan that the UK should be doing more on. There are human rights issues right across the Asia-Pacific region. I understand you guys call it the Indo-Pacific region, and we are of course happy to play along, because the Indo-Pacific region now is a reality.

We have seen statements from MPs about how many things were ignored in the UK-China relationship from a values perspective and a rights perspective at that time—this is 20, 30, 35 years ago—and were kind of left to the wayside. The conversation, perhaps not openly and explicitly, was: "Look, let's let China build up. It looks like it's going to be all guns blazing, in terms of economic growth. The value to the UK, to UK businesses, to UK citizens, is so immense that the human rights issues in Beijing are only going to irritate the Chinese leadership, so let's not deal with them." I think, certainly from the UK perspective, we can see how that turned out.

I think we are looking at an exact but more profound repeat situation. Of course, China has many issues, including territorial ones—again, when given the opportunity, I will come to how it figures in the Kashmir question—but the nature of the Kashmir dispute itself is so profound and so profoundly dangerous that I think attention to it and conversation around it merits urgent addressing.

Q200 **Liam Byrne:** The Simla agreement signed between India and Pakistan committed both sides not to unilaterally alter the situation. That was obviously broken when India decided to push through the Jammu and Kashmir reorganisation Bill in 2019. That was prima facie a unilateral change to the situation. Is it therefore realistic to keep insisting that, somehow, resolving Kashmir is a bilateral issue between India and Pakistan, or is it time now to get over that and start acknowledging that it will be resolved only with a multilateral approach?

Mosharraf Zaidi: I don't have anything to add to that. You have stated it as perfectly as it can be stated.

The one supplement or complement to that is that this is, net-net, in the benefit of the long-term interests of the economic growth and stability of India itself. Kashmir is not just a bleeding sore from a UK perspective. It is not just a distraction for India from its job in the Indian and Pacific oceans. It is also, net-net, an undermining of the Indian story itself. So, absolutely, it needs to be addressed.

Q201 **Liam Byrne:** Any other observations? Dr Mohan?

Garima Mohan: Not really, without having to go into domestic politics. In New Delhi, of course, there are different perceptions. As I mentioned, I think the China question is a bigger threat, although in terms of what you were saying—does it make sense to multilateralise the issue of Kashmir?—I don't think the Indian Government would be very happy with that statement.

Chair: I am just going to introduce Mr Hingorani. Thank you so much for joining us. I am sorry we had to move the session forward; we think we will have to go and vote in about 20 minutes, and we wanted to make sure we heard from you, rather than only having a six-minute session. When we come to you next, could you just give a 20-second introduction of yourself? Liam, please continue.

Q202 **Liam Byrne:** I was just going to make the point, Chair, that we had something like 295 international disputes between 1945 and 1995 where at least two states deployed force. About 171 of those resulted in multilateral negotiations in order to bring a peace settlement. Is there not a lesson there about how we resolve difficult problems like this?

Garima Mohan: I agree with you. Personally, I think that makes sense, but I would also like to hear Mr Hingorani's view on this since he is a legal expert and perhaps can add from that dimension. Walter, do you have anything to add?

Walter Ladwig: Just to echo that India's position has been long-standing in terms of resistance to outside involvement in resolving the dispute, and I do not see that changing.

Chair: We are going to come back to Kashmir with Henry shortly. Royston, do you want to come in?

Q203 **Royston Smith:** As a former colony, what is it that the Indian Government and the Indian people want from the UK?

Garima Mohan: That is an important question, if I can quickly jump in there. What it is really important to note is that Indian foreign policy does not look at Europe only through the prism of colonialism anymore. After a long time, finally, we see more of an understanding in Indian discourse of what kind of role Europe can play in the overall vision and world view that India has. That is not just dominated by the experience of colonialism. That is not to discount it, but I think India has finally moved away from that framing. As I mentioned before, it is beginning to look at Europe through a different lens.

In terms of the hierarchy of its partnerships, the most important are the Quad countries—the United States, Japan, Australia—and then its neighbourhood. After that, there are all these new regions where India is looking at reviving partnerships, be it the middle east or Europe, in particular, and that includes the UK.

The UK is expected to, first of all, play a more involved role in the new institutions that are emerging in the Indo-Pacific, but also on questions of

technology. When it comes to India battling climate change, it really needs access to technology, working with partners like the UK. When it comes to developing national capacities and resilience in combating the China threat, finally India has a view for what Europe can do, which goes beyond what was, in the past, very much an antagonistic relationship, where we would not agree on anything with Europe due to colonialism.

Walter Ladwig: I would characterise Indian interlocuters on the other side of the table as being incredibly pragmatic. They see opportunities for engagement with the UK that can be mutually and economically beneficial. In terms of a desire to strengthen India, they see the UK and Europe more broadly as a source of key technology that can either come to India through technology transfer or co-development—things like aerospace, and particularly jet propulsion technology, as well as maritime propulsion, artificial intelligence, clean energy and so forth. The UK, in particular, is a key source of services in the world—finance, higher education. These are all seen as possibilities for mutually beneficial interaction. Again, I think there are historical legacies at play, but I do not think we should let them overshadow things or be too much at the forefront of our minds.

Q204 **Saqib Bhatti:** I am going to move on to the economic potential of India. I will put a question to ask Dr Ladwig and then a follow-up to Dr Mohan. What is India's demographic dividend, and how far will it enable India to develop the economic might to support its power ambitions?

Walter Ladwig: That is a terrific question. When we look at India—this is true of many countries across south Asia, including Pakistan—it is incredibly young. Some 50% of the population is under 25. That contrasts with China, where the working-age population has ceased to grow, and some suggest that it has started to fall off a cliff, so China will grow old before it grows rich. There is a chance that this young, working-age, continual-growth population will really jump-start the Indian economy. If we look at the east Asian miracle of the '70s and '80s, this is how South Korea, Taiwan, Singapore and Japan were able to transform. So the hope is that India could move from an agricultural-based economy more towards a manufacturing and services one based on this intensive labour growth.

With this great opportunity comes a particularly important challenge, which is harnessing and providing opportunities for all of these young people. There are millions and millions entering the workforce every year, and the Indian economy is hard-pressed to create enough jobs for them, particularly in the formal sector. What makes the problem even worse is that most of this economic growth is occurring in what we would call India's least developed states—ones that are challenged with infrastructure, good governance, quality of education—so there are real issues around skill development. World Bank data for the last decade suggests that youth unemployment in India is north of 20%, which is by no means ideal.

At a minimum, failure to capitalise on this would suggest that India is losing a key opportunity to transform their economy. But taking it a step

further, you don't need a political scientist to tell you that a massive youth bulge, in which young people find that their aspirations are not met by their reality, has never historically been good for social and political stability. Obviously, job creation and skills training is a major focus for the Indian Government, and this is potentially an area, then, for UK-India co-operation, given the dramatic success of higher education in this country—it is one of our leading exports, if you want to put it in those terms. Finding ways to partner to deliver skills development education at scale would be a tremendous benefit to India.

Q205 **Saqib Bhatti:** Following on from that, Dr Mohan, we signed the comprehensive strategic partnership. What are the opportunities that you foresee there? Then I have another follow-up for you.

Garima Mohan: Just to add to the question of the demographic dividend, I would like to draw your attention to the Lowy Institute's Asia power index, which is a really useful tool that ranks countries in the Indo-Pacific and looks into the future. It ranks India as No. 1 when it comes to demographic resources by 2050, including working-age population, as well as the labour dividend.

I think there are two important things the Indian Government need to do to make use of this demographic dividend. One is restarting the negotiations for free trade agreements, which is a great step. Finally, it has happened and come to the fore, and they are promising that their attitude towards FTAs would be different this time. We will see. I think the UK-India negotiations are entering the tricky stages of sustainable development, labour rights and so on. We will see what the commitment is over there.

But I should also say that the Ministry of Commerce is moving more and more towards attracting investment by foreign businesses, including UK companies and European companies, that want to invest in India by making rules of investment easier and more transparent when it comes to the state governments that Walter was talking about—there are different regulations for every Indian state—in order to harness those opportunities.

I think India taking more of a step to integrate into the global economy is a very important development and will impact the UK-India partnership as well. I am very glad that India was mentioned in the Indo-Pacific tilt in the upcoming Indo-Pacific strategy—I understand there will be an India-specific chapter—because I think there is opportunity to do much more than in just the areas we were focusing on. Higher education, science and tech, of course, are examples, but there is also trade and investment in business relations.

Q206 **Saqib Bhatti:** Following on from that, the relationship with India is an important one, but is India a reliable ally in defending against authoritarian regimes such as China, given its own human rights record and its own move towards populism, and also its position of neutrality towards Russia, with which it continues to trade on a business-as-usual level?

Garima Mohan: That is a very important question. There are two ways of looking at it. First, when it comes to India's foreign policy, maintaining the rules-based order in the Indo-Pacific is a value that undergirds the Indo-Pacific strategies of all countries, including India. I think there, India is an important partner, because it has never participated in the kind of aggression we see from China and it believes in strengthening regional institutions and working with the rules set in the Indo-Pacific as a region. That is one aspect.

The second, of course, is India's domestic record, which is patchy and where there needs to be more conversations. The EU and India have revived their human rights dialogue. I think the UK can do something similar. The Indian Government seemed keen to do that with the EU. Why not with the UK as well?

When it comes to Russia, I would disagree with what you argue is neutrality towards Russia. The Indian Government have been increasingly critical of Russian actions from the time the conflict broke out. You can see in the statements—

Q207 **Chair:** Forgive me, you can say words, but at the same time you're buying up all the cheap oil and supplying weapons systems to Russia, the aggressor. Actions speak louder than words. The actions are that they are supportive of Russia, not just neutral—I go further than some people.

Garima Mohan: Okay, interesting. I would disagree with that. I don't think it's neutrality.

Q208 **Chair:** How is arming a country and buying all their oil, when everyone else is trying to stop them and deprive them of funding, neutrality?

Garima Mohan: I do not think India is arming Russia.

Chair: It is selling weapons to Russia.

Garima Mohan: I do not think it is.

Chair: It is.

Garima Mohan: I have not seen evidence for it.

Q209 **Chair:** And buying all their oil, when everyone else is trying to stop giving them money?

Garima Mohan: That is problematic, but a lot of countries in the global south are not on the same page when it comes to criticising Russia.

Q210 **Chair:** It is not a criticism: it is a choice between upholding the rules-based order, which you have said India wants to do, and saying, "We don't respect sovereignty and self-determination."

Garima Mohan: I do agree that there are contradictions in the Indian position, and I am not defending them; I am just trying to explain the view from New Delhi. I am sure you can disagree with it, but this is the position that is often held, and a lot of people believe in it. If you feel that

that is not a position that is justifiable in any way, or there is no room for understanding the Indian position—which a lot of Indians believe in, and they feel that they have a right to share their position—then I agree: India will be a difficult partner to work with when it comes to global challenges.

Q211 **Henry Smith:** Dr Hingorani, realistically—given the earlier discussion that we have had about Jammu and Kashmir—how much realism is there that there will be a solution to the problems that have existed for so many decades, and wider peace between India and Pakistan?

Aman Hingorani: First, let me introduce myself. I am a practising lawyer with a standing of over 30 years, and I am here in my capacity as author of the book "Unravelling the Kashmir Knot", which is devoted precisely to trying to find a solution to the Kashmir issue. That research started in 1995, and the book has been endorsed, if I may say so, by two former Chief Justices of India, members of the legal fraternity, diplomats, defence forces, security analysts and journalists. It has been well received and presented in international circles.

With that authority, if I may share my views, I would like to thank the Committee for giving me this opportunity. I seek to take a bit longer than what would be your standard three-minute to four-minute answer, because what you are asking me for is a solution to perhaps the longest-standing dispute that is still there in history.

As a point of departure, if we talk about the UN Security Council resolutions, India had moved at the United Nations under chapter 6 of the UN charter on pacific settlement of disputes complaining of invasion on the part of J&K—I will refer to Jammu and Kashmir as J&K—by tribes from Pakistan in 1947. They were substituted by regular Pakistan troops. The UN resolutions basically say, "The future of J&K will be determined by a plebiscite under UN supervision", and required Pakistan to first withdraw from the territory of Jammu and Kashmir occupied by it. Pakistan did not do so; Pakistan has virtually annexed that territory, and its Supreme Court has gone on to pass judgments—the judicial decisions of 1999 and 2019—which detract from the United Nations Security Council resolutions.

As far as India is concerned, it views itself as being released from the United Nations Security Council resolutions for the reasons I have given in the book, which include non-compliance by Pakistan, changes of circumstances, and so on and so forth. But where the book breaks ground is relying on declassified British archives, relying on reconstructing what actually happened in the United Nations Security Council at that point of time—there are thousands of pages that I have had to reconstruct—I have detailed in my book the geopolitical and strategic reasons for the Security Council to pass the resolutions, showing that those resolutions are not only without jurisdiction, but are in violation of the UN Charter and established principles of international law.

Having said that, these resolutions do not even otherwise address the subsequent occupation of the territory of J&K that is 20% by China. China quietly moved into Aksai Chin in 1950, and says it is its territory. Pakistan

gifted a part of this territory to China on 2 March 1963 in the boundary agreement. We have Pakistan virtually handing over the Gilgit-Baltistan region of Jammu and Kashmir to China—that is how the China-Pakistan economic border has been conceived. That is a vital part of China's broader belt and road initiative.

In these circumstances, there is a political stalemate between India, Pakistan and China. I do not see a political, military, diplomatic or economic solution to break that political stalemate.

I have, however, suggested a solution in my book which has escaped consideration so far. And if I very briefly talk about that. The distinctive feature of the Kashmir issue is that the stand of both India and Pakistan on the status of Jammu and Kashmir necessarily has to be grounded in the British statutes that created India and Pakistan. India is an ancient civilisation, but modern-day India and Pakistan are creations of the Indian Independence Act 1947, which, and the amended Government of India Act 1935 passed by the British Parliament. If you use that as a basis to test the legal stand of India and Pakistan, we can actually try to use international law—I heard about multilateralism, I am not in favour of a political body like the Security Council and those resolutions—but we can use international law to try to break the political stalemate between India, Pakistan and China so that there is momentum towards a political settlement eventually.

Let me explain why I say that we can use international law to depoliticise the Kashmir issue. Under the British statutes that I referred to, all the princely states under British control on the subcontinent were to regain full sovereignty. That sovereignty vested in the ruler of the state, regardless of the religious complexion of the people of the state concerned. It was the ruler alone who could decide to accede to India or Pakistan or to remain independent. The sovereign ruler of J&K unconditionally acceded to India on 26 October 1947 in the manner prescribed by the British statutes. In my reading of the law, that accession made J&K an integral part of India. Since the accession of J&K to India was in terms of the same British statutes that also created Pakistan, it would be fair to say that the law that gave birth to Pakistan itself made J&K a part of India.

The UK, of course, is bound by the British statutes passed by its own Parliament but, unfortunately, successive Governments from 1947 have not honoured the British laws passed by the British Parliament that would make J&K an integral part of India.

Q212 **Chair:** Mr Hingorani—it would be helpful if you could please wrap up. I can see that you are reading; go on.

Aman Hingorani: Just two minutes more.

Chair: Let's keep it to one minute, please, because we might have to vote in the next five minutes.

Aman Hingorani: Very well. I explained in the book that although the Government of India in 1947 had talked about the accession being

provisional, committed to UN supervised plebiscite, UN resolutions were passed, and the princely states of Junagadh and Hyderabad had a plebiscite, that does not change this legal position. The point is that if an international body like the ICJ, for instance, confirms the legal position that the territory of J&K is an integral part of India—it will shape the political discourse internationally, it will build a consensus. There will be some movement towards resolving this politically. So the suggestion—law cannot resolve the Kashmir issue—but the suggestion is that we use law to depoliticise the Kashmir issue and solve the political stalemate. I will stop here, but I am of course happy to take questions.

Q213 **Chair:** Mr Zaidi, you said earlier that Britain should be engaging more on Kashmir. Do you think that we can depoliticise the issue of Kashmir, as has been suggested, and how should Britain be engaging on that?

Mosharraf Zaidi: Certainly not alone. India is now such a substantial global power, regardless of the hesitation that Pakistanis tend to have with that formulation, that the idea that the UK on its own can somehow compel India to sit down with China and with Pakistan—

By the way, the one constituency in this that is the most important one that we have not spoken about is the Kashmiri people. I want to draw special attention to that, partly because of all your constituents. A substantial number of every constituency in this country has Kashmiris from all parts of Kashmir represented among them. As Aman already pointed out, this is really a four-way conflict. It is the Kashmiri people at the centre, it is India as the principal antagonist of the Kashmiri people as an occupying force, and there are problems and issues that have been caused both by Pakistan and by China. These four parties have to—

Aman Hingorani: I'm sorry, Mr Zaidi, but those were not my words—

Chair: I am going to let Mr Zaidi continue, so that he gets his opportunity to speak.

Mosharraf Zaidi: Whatever I said is not attributed to Aman. I own what I say and, therefore, what I said is what I meant. It is a four-way conflict between the people of Kashmir, the Indian state, and of course Pakistan and China. The China factor, of course, had disappeared, and it was only the unilateral change in the status quo of Kashmir, which was attempted by India on 5 August 2019, that reinserted and sucked China back into this conflict. You will remember that, not long after that, there was the Galwan incident, which took place inside Kashmir. Again, with respect to what Aman was talking about, the original Kashmir that was run by the Maharaja included Aksai Chin. It included Galwan and all the parts that are contested not just between India and Pakistan, but between India and China. There are profoundly important disputes and sets of conflicts that have to be addressed.

I will just take a quick minute to describe which countries might be the UK's key partners in this: Saudi Arabia, the United Arab Emirates and Qatar, principally—the three countries that are possibly more affected by

this than the UK. We saw what happened in this country when Indians and Pakistanis, or rather British nationals of Indian and Pakistani extraction, got overly hopped up on the television channels that are beaming their nationalistic propaganda from their home fronts into British homes and causing British citizens to turn against each other. That kind of a situation emerging on the streets of Riyadh, Jeddah, Dubai or Abu Dhabi is an absolute national and GCC nightmare.

This is not just about the domestic situation. The Kashmir issue caused conflagration, or certainly a knocking of heads, between Saudi Arabia and Pakistan not long ago—less than two years ago. India and many GCC countries have gotten into arguments over statements made by prominent personalities in the GCC about what is happening in Kashmir. Kashmir is a constant reminder of the Kashmir issue, yet somehow we insist on developing a tilt to the Indo-Pacific—not just in this country, but in all the great western democracies—that seeks to ignore this. There is more to be gained economically from India's role as a net security provider, which it is not currently. As long as the issue of Kashmir is burning, India cannot serve as the net security provider that so many of us, I think including smart people in Pakistan, would like to see it emerge into. Why wouldn't people who look like me want people who look like Indians to succeed? Can you see a difference?

There is an almost surreal quality to the fact that this is even a debate—that this should not form at least its own chapter in any UK Indo-Pacific strategy, and that this should not make up a bigger part of the concerns not just of this Committee, but of the entire House of Commons, in terms of what the future of this country will look like 30 years down the road. Thirty years down the road, more and more people in this room and on the streets in the country are going to look like people like me and people like Garima, and those people need to find ways to get along. As long as the sore of Kashmir is bleeding, all the conflicts in this region will continue to irritate and provoke instability at home, in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean region, and all around the world where Indians and Pakistanis—for the most part, thankfully—come together but also, sadly, where they come apart.

Q214 **Drew Hendry:** If the Division Bell allows, I would like to push the issue a wee bit more on human rights. I would like your views on how India can be a key partner of the UK in defending democracy in the Indo-Pacific, given its record on human rights. In particular, I want to focus on the detention of Jagtar Singh Johal. Is it indicative of the Indian position on human rights that they have a UK citizen held there? How do we communicate that this treatment of UK citizens is unacceptable while seeking a deeper relationship? Perhaps I could start with Dr Hingorani.

Chair: Just to update everyone on votes, it looks like they will not happen until 4.10 pm. Certain colleagues have chosen to speak for lengthy periods. If you have a look at who is speaking, you will know what I mean.

Aman Hingorani: I do not agree with the very foundation of this question. Human rights should not be seen through the western prism

alone. There are many unimpeachable studies that document horrific British atrocities, such as the suppression of the Indian freedom movement, the terrible Jallianwala Bagh massacre, the millions of lives lost during the Bengal famine and, in partition, 2 million people—innocent men, women and children—being butchered and 14 million displaced—the largest number in history. When we talk about human rights, what can be more destructive to human rights than systemically plundering a prosperous country, destroying its economy, deindustrialising it, leading it into inhuman poverty, hunger and disease, and setting the stage for perpetual conflict, which we have seen to date?

I would just say that before the UK sets out to engage with countries that suffered British imperialism, it should in my view introspect about its own policies that have led to these kinds of multiple flashpoints and unresolved territorial disputes. I see your integrated review has listed out the items that are of concern for British security: multiple potential flashpoints, unresolved territorial disputes, nuclear proliferation, climate change, non-state actors, terrorism and so on. This introspection would help to persuade the UK Government not to continue to permit its soil to be used for activities that may be described as terrorist or criminal in nature. The UK cannot ignore the voices that are growing louder about reparations and about returning items of historical and cultural significance—valuables—that were misappropriated from former colonies.

So, if the UK seriously wants to partner with countries in the Indo-Pacific region, I feel that UK leaders will have to take concrete steps to undo past wrongs, so as to have the moral standing to defend democracy and promote human rights in other jurisdictions. It is a very emotive issue on this side of the world. We do not share the perception of the western world on this whole concept of human rights, it cannot be seen only through the western prism.

As regards your specific question about Mr Jagtar Singh Johal, I can point out that that is not really in my domain. Like I said, I am here in my capacity to talk about the Kashmir issue. That is what my expertise is. Mr Johal has nothing to do as such, from what I understand, with the Kashmir issue, so that question can best be directed to the competent people. I do not know what Mr Zaidi's view would be, but we on the subcontinent would like to see British leaders do something much more. Other countries have started giving reparations. European nations have acknowledged their past mistakes. Unless those past mistakes are undone, I don't really see how the UK can actually talk about human rights violations in other countries.

Drew Hendry: Notwithstanding that obviously we have a UK citizen who is being held there, I really am interested in how going forward—I hear what has been said about the historical situation—we can take that into account. As I say, I repeat my question that it is unacceptable to treat UK citizens in that way while trying to seek a deeper relationship. Perhaps I could hand over to the other panellist.

Mosharraf Zaidi: Just really quickly, I think that UK citizens are obviously like citizens anywhere, including Indian citizens and Pakistani citizens. The problem that, again, I am super-interested in is: what about the people of Kashmir, who essentially for 70-plus years have refused to be identified in the way that their papers or their occupation insist they be identified as? That is, they don't want to be Indian; they want to be Kashmiri. The cost of this is quite substantial. On this whole moral standing argument, I agree in large part with Aman. I think that if we get into the space of moral arguments, we go all over the place, because then we start to prosecute things 200 or 150 years in the past. I am more interested in thinking about what has happened in the past few years, what might happen tomorrow and what might happen in 25 years. I have a daughter. She is my youngest; she is 13. My eldest boy is 18. My self-interest is really only about what happens going forward, rather than what has already happened.

In terms of what has already happened in Kashmir, the Indian Government's official statistics on the number of deaths in Kashmir—we don't need to go into a single case—show 44,000-plus deaths. In terms of what has already happened in Kashmir, the Indian Government's official statistics on the number of deaths in Kashmir—we don't need to go into a single case—show 44,000-plus deaths. That is according to Indian Government sources, Kashmiri civil society organisations, Amnesty, Human Rights Watch. What about all those, you know, widely reviled organisations? They say this number is closer to 90,000.

Is there a statute of limitations or is there a trigger point where we start to care more about this? At least among western audiences, it's clear that there isn't, but there are more urgent things, beyond the morality of all this, that threaten peace and stability. Remember, Kashmir is the cause of three wars between India and Pakistan, and one full-scale war between India and China. That is, by the way, how Aksai Chin—the part of Kashmir that is held by China, which was referred to earlier—came to be. Not only have we had those four wars between those three nuclear powers, but we have had conflagrations in the last few years, particularly that in February 2019 when India sent jets across the border, and then Pakistan reciprocated, and an Indian pilot was captured by the Pakistanis and returned.

We also had the Galwan incident in summer 2021, when dozens of Indian and Chinese soldiers used batons to turn each other's heads into ketchup and mush. These are actual human beings who are doing this. What are the chances of any of these conflicts escalating beyond batons or beyond planes dropping bombs on open fields to something much more dangerous? Well, we saw that too. In March 2022, India fired a BrahMos missile, which India claims accidentally landed in Pakistan. You can well imagine what the chain of escalation, or the escalation ladder in Pakistan, looks like when a nuclear-capable missile accidentally lands in Pakistan.

These are all issues that are vital to the tilt to the Indo-Pacific. The purpose of the tilt to the Indo-Pacific is to create a more stable and secure

world where freedom of navigation and the right of passage of goods and services through the Indian Ocean and the Pacific Ocean are ensured. How is that possible? How is it possible for India to be a viable partner in that project when so much of its attention is focused on Kashmir? How?

We talked about procuring Russian equipment. The S-400 Russian weapons system was procured by India at a cost of nearly $6 billion not long ago. The first place it was deployed was not against China; it was deployed in Punjab, pointed at Pakistan. Why? Because of Kashmir. Where is the Punjab? Right beneath Kashmir. Punjab is the place that secures the Indian occupation of Kashmir. Not only is Russian equipment being deployed in this way; so is western equipment. So, the 36 Rafales that India bought from your NATO and former EU partner, France, cost $9 billion. Where did those get deployed? The first battery—the first squadron, 18 of those planes—also deployed in the Punjab in Ambala, again pointed at Pakistan.

Look, like I said, India is not only a rising country; it is already a great country. It is one of the biggest countries in the world. It will be the largest on all metrics, sooner or later. Morgan Stanley says 2030 and I say 2040, but whatever timeline we put to it, the demographics ensure that India is going to be a dominant country. Now is the time to ensure that before India becomes the dominant power in the region, uncontested—no contest from Pakistan, no contest from Bangladesh, Nepal, Sri Lanka and all those countries that are constantly fighting for territory and for attention from India—and when all is said and done, we have addressed the Kashmir issue, which will serve everybody's interests. That means Pakistani interests, UK interests, and certainly—hopefully—Kashmiri interests.

Chair: Drew, do you want to come in again?

Drew Hendry: No, I would just like to hear the views of Dr Ladwig and Dr Mohan.

Walter Ladwig: Sure, I want to respond. I don't know that we can say that there is something called western conceptions of human rights and someone else's conceptions. You know, when we talk about things like democracy, it is the case that we sometimes use those terms very loosely when there are multiple definitions and multiple understandings, some of which are very narrow and procedural, such as, do you have elections and do Governments change? Some encompass a much broader sense of things. We think that accompanying democracy should be things like a free press, an independent judiciary and so forth.

Although Indian leaders are very uncomfortable particularly with an American-style democracy promotion rhetoric, we have seen, since the mid-2000s, India in its south-south outreach doing training of thousands of African and Asian officials in electoral and parliamentary democracy. We see things like good governance and engagement with civil society being part of India's developmental agenda and developmental programme. This may reflect a more narrow conception of democracy than we have, in

which these other things like human rights, a free press and an independent judiciary are not bound up, but I do not see India as not contributing in its region. I cannot speak to the specific case that you are raising, but India in its conception of democracy is moving things forward. It is different, perhaps, than the one we have, and those are where the conversations need to take place.

Garima Mohan: I agree with what Dr Ladwig said: India would not participate in democracy promotion efforts with the west because it defines democracy promotion essentially very differently. It is a very narrow and technical definition of democracy that you may not agree with here. As Walter mentioned, it includes building Parliaments and institutions and training parliamentarians, and this has taken place from Afghanistan to Africa to south-east Asia and other parts of the world.

Galwan and the India-China border has been mentioned several times. While I agree that Kashmir is a very important issue, I think we need to zoom out and look at the role of China in the region. The conflict on the India-China border dates back to before Galwan, since President Xi took office. From 2014, we have seen several instances of border infrastructure being created and incursions on the Indian side that India considers to be provoked from the Chinese side—Chinese aggression. I am sure it is contested, but that is the case from the Indian perspective.

It was mentioned before that all of India's arms purchases are perhaps aimed at Pakistan. The consensus in New Delhi, including the view of its security establishment, is that the threat from China is clear and present. This imbues every aspect of Indian foreign policy and the way India sees Asia and the world. For example, former Foreign Secretary Vijay Gokhale mentioned that India and China are now in a state of "armed co-existence", which is a pretty big deal, and the Indian Foreign Minister recently said that the India-China relationship would determine the future of Asia, as well as the future of the Indo-Pacific.

There are no two ways about how India sees the China problem, which has also meant that India is now increasingly pushed towards working with the Quad partners, including the United States. That, of course, creates tension—what values? Which rules? Where exactly does India stand? Which camp is it in? Is it in the revisionist camp in which post-colonial countries do what they want and have their own definitions of democracy, human rights and so on, or does it want to work closely with western partners? Now that the partnership with China has not quite panned out, what does that mean for Indian domestic and foreign policy going forward? These are still open questions.

Q215 **Drew Hendry:** Clearly, human rights do exist in both parties. I want to get back to the original part of the question—the answers may be difficult—which was: how can India be a key partner with the UK in defending democracy in the Indo-Pacific area? That seems to be a real challenge; is that correct?

Walter Ladwig: What creates challenges is that the foreign policy behaviour and what is happening domestically seem to be moving in two different directions. We see that in the international sphere. Although I do not think anyone would think that India is strictly happy with the existing international order, in the sense that it would like to see revisions to economic and political institutions of governance to give itself and rising powers a greater voice, India is not trying to upend the existing international system. It has worked with partners and is increasingly willing to align with like-minded states. The Quad was mentioned. The energy that India has put in in recent years to build relationships with the major democracies of Asia is notable.

The things that are happening outside India—the current Government's foreign policy—are largely in line with co-operative efforts to bolster a rules-based order. What we are seeing domestically in India is not necessarily in keeping with that. This raises the key challenge for policy makers, because internationally, in a macro sense, India is very much a co-operative partner. But when we look inside the state, it is potentially a different and difficult story. I do not know if one would draw a parallel to the challenges of working with the Trump Administration in the United States over a four-year period, but sometimes you have to navigate difficult relationships to achieve your goals.

Q216 **Chair:** Thank you. We will go to Liam in just a second, but I have three questions—I will come to Dr Hingorani first and then everyone can choose which question they want to take. And just to clarify something: I mentioned earlier India selling arms to Russia, but I was incorrect. India is the world's biggest buyer of Russian arms. However, I would argue that the point remains—you are funding the war chest of Russia.

What are the key risks for miscalculation between India and Pakistan and also India and China? How do we make progress on Kashmir? I am not asking for a solution, because if there was one, we would have one—but we want to see progress. Finally, on the question of human rights, Dr Ladwig put it really well, but rather than saying what is not the Indian prism of human rights, what is the Indian human rights prism? I do not want to be told what it is not, and that it is not western; I want to understand what it is.

Dr Hingorani, I do not know which of those questions you want to take, but please don't feel the need to take all three.

Aman Hingorani: I will start with the last question. I did not say that there are different notions of human rights in the west and in India. All I am saying is that human rights should not be seen through the prism—

Q217 **Chair:** I fully understood what you were saying. I am saying that rather than saying what it is not, let's define it by what it is.

Aman Hingorani: It is not a question of what it is or what it is not. India is a civilisation that has always spoken for human dignity. You can frame, formulate it in whatever language you want to, but the sense of human dignity and human worth is very much the definition of human rights in

India. All I am saying is that one nation, one set of countries or one side of the world should not necessarily judge another through their own prism. But I do not want to join issues on that.

I know that there were three questions. Maybe others are better suited to answering them—this is not my area of expertise—but I want to respond to what was said earlier. We are seeing today symptoms. It is all very well to say, "Don't go back into history; what do you want to do in future," but historical wrongs have led to present-day conflicts whether in India, whether in the Middle East, when you have the partition boundaries being drawn up whether on religious, ethnic or sectarian lines. Unless we address that, I do not see any lasting peace between India and Pakistan. The question was, "How do we get peace?"

Chair: No, the question was, "How do we progress?" Forgive me, but I don't think there is any disputing that we recognise the role that UK has played historically in this. We recognise that an imperfect situation has been created, but our goal is to scrutinise in order to improve stability around the world and ensure that there is reduced risk.

Aman Hingorani: For that, I think if we were talking about India and Pakistan in particular, the international community would first need to grasp the long-term impact of 1947 on the people of the subcontinent and how it heightened the notions of nationalism, religious identity and the political contestations that we see today. The reason why we have that today is because there is transgenerational misery and bloodshed which has happened on the subcontinent. Unless the international community understands the psyche of the people, there will be no lasting peace. It is not only the Kashmir issue; there is emotional trauma. The way you had national reconciliation in South Africa—there are ways of trying to heal people, that have not happened on the subcontinent.

Chair: Forgive me, there is trauma, for example, in Bosnia. This Committee has done great work on Bosnia. There is a lot of immediate trauma within Bosnia; there are women who live with the fact that 20 members of their family were murdered, and who were raped and put in rape camps. We recognise the trauma and the role that that plays, but we still identify meaningful solutions to try and move things forward and progress. We want to be helpful.

Aman Hingorani: I don't agree because this will only happen when the people on the subcontinent—India, Pakistan and Bangladesh—actually are fully aware of the facts. I invite them to read declassified British archives. It is all very well for the UK to take a stand—we know our role. "Our role" was not only that which is in the public domain. The whole partition of the subcontinent was scripted, and the Kashmir issue was scripted, by the British, as per the British archives—

Q218 **Chair:** Apologies; we are not questioning the history—I really don't think anyone on this Committee is questioning the history.

Aman Hingorani: I am not sure—

Chair: We are not questioning the role the British played, but we are saying that we want to look forward and go on from there.

Aman Hingorani: For that, the British Government, for instance, should own up and say, "These are the British statutes. This is the legal position." The UK has a huge global influence. Their say will carry weight if they say, "Yes, we did this. We are sorry for this. This is the way forward. This is the legal position." And does the international community have a stance?

For instance, I will give you one short instance. What is the stance of the international community, when we want to check China's rise, what is the stance of the international community on the fact that CPEC advances through Gilgit-Baltistan, which is Indian territory? Has the international community taken a stand on that? How is that feasible? How is that possible in international law?

Of course we need the international community to lean on India, Pakistan, the whole world, to bring peace, and to have international peace and stability, but the role that the international community has performed so far has not been in terms of international law, or even of the UN charter. So, if you are asking me what you can do, I think the British Government needs to introspect about its role and its policies that have led to the current situation and then lend its weight in trying to rectify that.

Q219 **Chair:** So it is looking at "lend its weight"—we need to break that down. Phrases like "we need to help" and "we need to lend our weight" don't get us anywhere. Looking to the rest of the panel, what does lending our weight look like? Give us meaningful direction on where we take this and how we improve things and reduce the risk of miscalculations. Dr Mohan?

Garima Mohan: I would perhaps prefer it if other witnesses weighed in on that. I would like to come back on the Russia question. At the risk of opening that box again, there are two points I want to make.

Chair: Yes. Dr Ladwig, would you like to come in on this?

Walter Ladwig: On the question of misperception—

Chair: Miscalculation.

Walter Ladwig: Miscalculation, yes. On the India-Pakistan side, the good news story in my opinion is the high degree of restraint that we have seen in recent crises. Although we had the tit-for-tat airstrikes, which was the first time that air power had been used since 1971, actually it stopped there. It really did not escalate. That was quite a concern, ahead of time, for many analysts and observers. The point, which has already been referenced, that the firing of the BrahMos missile—a nuclear-capable warhead—into Pakistan did not invoke catastrophe is pretty remarkable. I think we are rather blasé about it, but if you had run those scenarios by scholars or analysts ahead of time, you would have predicted high degrees of calamity. So, on the one hand, I do think that there are some good levels of restraint.

One key area of perhaps misperception or where perceptions are challenged is the degree to which Pakistani security authorities have command and control or real clear direction over terrorist groups that are based in their territories. For example, in 2019, it was an Indian Kashmiri youth who carried out the attack that led to the airstrikes. Because he professed to be acting on behalf of Jaish-e-Mohammed, a Pakistani-based group, that was taken as evidence and licence to hold Pakistan accountable. The degree to which they should be culpable and they have the ability to shape the actions of such groups is unclear, and I think that is a really key question.

in terms of the relationship between India and China, there are still questions about the direction of the incursions that occurred in 2020 and understanding about the process by which those came about. But then, from the Chinese side, there would appear to be a very significant misunderstanding about the effects those have had on India. Chinese diplomats today still seem to persist in this idea of saying, "Hey, you know, we've had this border dispute for decades, but remember how we just put it in the box and we agreed to interact positively in the economic sphere and build our relationship with each other? Let's go back to that. Why don't we just do that again?" They don't fully appreciate and understand the degree to which the China relationship has become so politicised among the Indian public. In the past, you often got public opinion polls where "don't know" was the leading answer to, "What do you think of China?" It is now all extremely negative and those "don't knows" have shifted very hard. I don't think that Beijing fully appreciates that.

Garima Mohan: Can I come in on the China point before we go to you, Mosharraf?

Mosharraf Zaidi: Of course.

Garima Mohan: I do think that is a very important flashpoint that the UK and all partners need to monitor. When the first clashes happened in Galwan it took 10 days for any western press to report it. I counted and *The Guardian* reported it after 10 days. It is astounding that two major nuclear powers are having violence on the border after 45 years, with all the agreements torn to shreds, and it took so long for us even to report it and understand the significance of it. I think that is a flashpoint in the tilt toward the Indo-Pacific that we really need to look at. That brings me to the point of India's reluctance to openly condemn Russia, because for India the nightmare scenario is Russia and China acting in unison, with Russia being the junior partner.

When it comes to the arms question that you raised, that is a legacy relationship that India developed over decades, when everybody was still working with Russia and western partners were not supplying arms to India—they were in fact supplying arms to Pakistan at that point. There are of course many instances where the Indian establishment made mistakes in overdependence on Russia, and Ukraine has been a wake-up call on how on how that constrains India's strategic autonomy.

We can talk all about how India wants to be an independent country with its own opinions, but its autonomy was significantly restricted by over-reliance on Russia. The economic partnership is zero; it is all defence and military technology. Now India is saying, "Now we want to diversify and do more with the US and France," but it takes decades to reduce this dependence.

India is in a very difficult position with Russia, which is unable now to supply any arms, because it is using them in the field, and India knows that they don't really work well. But in the time these cycle out of the Indian army and in the time they are able to deploy new western-bought arms or manufacture any of their own, there is an open window for China. I feel that this is a flashpoint that really needs to be paid attention to. We don't understand, because it is a complicated border and a lot of it is covered in snow and ice, but there are clear areas where we can see flashpoints where international order is being violated. What can we do to persuade China, in this instance, to play with international law?

Chair: That was really helpful, thank you.

Mosharraf Zaidi: I think Garima and I have a slight convergence on the importance of paying attention to the flashpoints in the China-India relationship, but, again, on the trigger for Galwan, we have to understand it for what it was, rather than what I think Indian policymakers would want western decision makers to believe. Quite rightly, there can be dissonance between those two. It is perfectly in India's interest to say one thing about one thing to the western world and to do different things on those things with the western world watching. Perhaps India's capabilities in the diplomatic arena are now so well developed that it can continue to sustain the fiction of its investment in a proper so-called anti-China bloc, while its actual behaviour vis-à-vis both Russia and China portends something very different.

Throughout President Xi's regime but also post Galwan, India-China trade has been growing, not decreasing. Where we talk about bifurcation or, because of technology considerations, about the fact that we want to split how technology is procured and get less and less of it from China, there is a number of cosmetic things that India has done in terms of dealing with things like TikTok and then there is the material growth in both trade with China and its relationship with Russia. After Putin invaded Ukraine, the most regular bilateral conversation that he had with any world leader was not with the Pakistani leadership, the UK leadership or the Chinese leadership, but with Narendra Modi. He and Putin had at least three conversations in the first few days and weeks after the invasion of Ukraine.

This is all, by the way, kudos to India. India pursues its interests regardless of how you or I feel about those interests. I think the best we can do, rather than making judgments on that, is to see what the role of this Committee is, and that is to protect UK interests.

I will go back to how dangerous the continued non-addressal of Kashmir and the non-resolution is. There have been both subtle and explicit hints suggesting that Kashmir is an internal or domestic issue for India. That formulation in and of itself is the cause of these wars—1948, between India and Pakistan; 1965, between India and Pakistan; 1999, between India and Pakistan; 1962, between China and India; the conflagration at Galwan between India and China in 2020; the conflagration between Pakistan and India in February 2019. Every single one of those conflicts is anchored in India's occupation of Kashmir. Now, that does not suggest that we should somehow cause a de-occupation of India's role in Kashmir; it suggests that a resolution to the Kashmir dispute that everybody can live with is possible.

You asked—that is why I want to go into this detail—for practical steps and material that you can use, in terms of how this is possible. First, if you go to India and say, "We are going to resolve Kashmir for you," they are going to say, "No," so I don't think that is the path forward. I have already mentioned Saudi Arabia, the UAE and Qatar as vital partners for the UK in this. I think there are many other partners, including the European Union, NATO, the United States, and indeed a lot of the ASEAN countries, which are as invested in watching India grow and emerge as a dominant economic force in the region. Every single country on the planet sees the future that portends for India. In terms of economic power, it is undisputed. The question is not whether we should all turn anti-India or adopt the Pakistani line on it; it is how we help it actualise its true potential as a dominant economic power and a net security provider in the Asia-Pacific region and the Indian Ocean region. The only pathway that guarantees that path is a resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

I am sorry I am taking up so much time, but there are two or three things we have to be conscious of. First, as I have already mentioned, there are four parties to the dispute. The primary and principal one is the people of Kashmir. They are probably the easiest to manage and address because they have been under this occupation for 70 years. They have watched 90,000 people die. Six thousand mass graves emerged out of just five districts in India back in 2012. This is all reported by British journalists, and it has been discussed in the House of Commons not once, not twice but multiple times. It is important that we remind ourselves of the human cost of this conflict. Again, the current Indian Government, Indian citizens writ large, the Indian economy and its future potential should not be held hostage to history; they should be freed from the burden of the current situation, which is unsustainable.

There have been multiple formulae deployed to try to solve Kashmir. One was the four-point formula by the Pakistani dictator Musharraf. That might be a starting point, but I don't necessarily think it is the only way. Aman's formulation might be a good one. It will open up a can of worms for other princely states that acceded to Pakistan. India will never concede Andhra Pradesh's Hyderabad to the people of Pakistan, even though I would love it because the cuisine and the tech capability in Andhra Pradesh are

phenomenal, and an immediate boost to the Pakistani economy would emerge. If we want to go that route, we definitely get Hyderabad.

In all seriousness—we need to be serious about this—the resolution of the Kashmir dispute is absolutely one of the only touchpoints where there is common ground between Beijing, London, Brussels, Washington DC and other world capitals. Why? Because the Chinese have been dragged back into this as of 5 August 2019. Frankly, given the growth of bilateral trade between India and China, I don't think China wants to exert itself in the mountains. The problem that you want to address is probably the problem that China wants to pose to you in the South China Sea and the greater Indian Ocean region. To do that capability as a partner for you, India has to be freed of the burden of trying to sustain this unsustainable occupation in Kashmir, so from every angle you come at it, the incentives are there.

In trying to encourage or pursue resolution, I think that, beyond the wellbeing of the people of Indian-occupied Kashmir, there is the language of international rules and norms, which is part of the language of the tilt to the Indo-Pacific and the review that produced this conversation. I think that the UN Security Council resolutions might be useful, but so too could any of the bilateral agreements between India and Pakistan over many years. As a party to this, China's interest is in watching India and Pakistan come to an agreement. There are many versions of those kinds of agreement that I think China would happily sign on to.

I do not think that that will happen very quickly. This has taken 70-plus years to emerge, so whatever resolution we conceive of has to be thought of in multi-year terms. It has to be built on confidence-building measures that take small but deliberate steps in the right direction, and that forever shut down the possibility of conflict between India and Pakistan, and India and China, and thereby contribute to India's capability of being a real, functional and robust partner in the Indo-Pacific tilt.

Chair: I reckon we probably have only about two minutes.

Q220 **Liam Byrne:** On that point, given that we signed the instrument of accession back in October 1947, they are now clearly in breach. I have constituents who have family members with pellets in their faces, and who have lived in lockdown. Are the British Government doing enough to push forward a solution?

Mosharraf Zaidi: Absolutely not, but that is partly because the British Government's principal preoccupation is trying to secure whatever economic growth might be available around the world. Again, you are going to keep going back to India. I would say again that there is no escaping the economic role of India in your future. It therefore becomes even more important that you invest time and effort in a resolution to Kashmir, so that that growth is sustained and resilient to the threat of a conflagration between either China and India or Pakistan and India.

Aman Hingorani: May I speak for two minutes?

Chair: I am afraid we don't have two minutes. We have to run to vote

physically.

Aman Hingorani: Yes, but—

Chair: I am really sorry, but we have to finish. We have to go to a different building to vote. I am very grateful to everyone. Please submit in writing to us any further points you wish to make. We have had a very complex and nuanced discussion, and there are no easy answers—or else there would have been a solution by now. We are very grateful to you all for taking the time.