

WEBVTT

00:00:14.912 --> 00:00:21.292

<v SPEAKER\_1>Hello again, and welcome to Global Exchange, part of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute's Podcast Network.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>I'm your host, Colin Robertson.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>On this episode, recorded on May the 8th, we speak with Dr.

00:00:26.772 --> 00:00:38.052

<v SPEAKER\_1>Mariam Mufti and CGAI fellows, Randolph Mank and Vina Nadjibulla, about the deepening crisis between India and Pakistan and what it means for Canada.

00:00:38.052 --> 00:00:46.832

<v SPEAKER\_1>Mariam is Associate Professor and Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies in the Department of Political Science at the University of Waterloo.

00:00:46.832 --> 00:00:55.352

<v SPEAKER\_1>Randolph is a career Foreign Service Officer whose assignments included serving as Canadian Ambassador to Pakistan as well as Indonesia and Malaysia.

00:00:55.352 --> 00:00:59.832

<v SPEAKER\_1>He is currently President of Mank Global Inc and we find him in London.

00:00:59.832 --> 00:01:04.752

<v SPEAKER\_1>Vina is Vice President, Research and Strategy, Asia Pacific Foundation of Canada.

00:01:04.752 --> 00:01:08.112

<v SPEAKER\_1>She's in Vancouver and I should have added that Mariam is at the University of Waterloo.

00:01:08.872 --> 00:01:11.812

<v SPEAKER\_1>Welcome Vina, Mariam and Randolph.

00:01:11.812 --> 00:01:14.072

<v SPEAKER\_2>Thank you Colin.

00:01:14.072 --> 00:01:26.552

<v SPEAKER\_1>For listeners, we still don't know who perpetrated the terrorist attack in the famously picturesque Kashmiri town of Pahalgam leaving 26 Indian tourists dead a week and a half ago.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>We can however be reasonably sure that whoever did it wanted an Indian response.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>It came in the form of Indian fighter jets bombing suspected terrorist sites in Pakistan, ongoing sniping by Indian and Pakistani border troops, and provocative words and military exercises from each nation.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>India has also suspended the 1960 Indus Water Sharing Treaty with Pakistan.

00:01:50.732 --> 00:02:07.972

<v SPEAKER\_1>Pakistan has responded by suspending 1972 similar agreement that the countries, and it's particularly important because both countries have nuclear weapons, which is why this dispute, you want to see this settled peacefully sooner than later.

00:02:07.972 --> 00:02:12.152

<v SPEAKER\_1>Should add that trade and travel between the two nations has also suspended.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>United Nations, China, and the United States have all offered to mediate.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>For Canada, the Kashmir is home not just to a number of Canadians from both sides of the border, but it was also the site of our first UN peacekeeping mission in 1948, following the partition and creation of India and Pakistan with the departure of the British Raj and the independence of the two states, one predominantly Hindu and the other mostly Muslim.

00:02:39.692 --> 00:02:41.072

<v SPEAKER\_1>So let's get started.

00:02:41.072 --> 00:02:42.552

<v SPEAKER\_1>Randolph, let me turn to you.

00:02:42.552 --> 00:02:46.092

<v SPEAKER\_1>Can you give a bit more context to what's behind this current crisis?

00:02:46.092 --> 00:02:50.232

<v SPEAKER\_1>I know that arguably it dates back to the origins of the two countries.

00:02:51.272 --> 00:02:52.432  
<v SPEAKER\_3>Yes, it does, Colin.

00:02:52.432 --> 00:02:54.592  
<v SPEAKER\_3>It's a tragic tale.

00:02:54.592 --> 00:03:03.212  
<v SPEAKER\_3>Coincidentally, I'm talking to you from London, England, where I was just earlier today sitting at the vaunted desk of Lester B.

00:03:03.212 --> 00:03:11.752  
<v SPEAKER\_3>Pearson, where he worked when it was wartime here, and they're commemorating an important anniversary of that over here.

00:03:12.852 --> 00:03:20.192  
<v SPEAKER\_3>So conflict as well as peacekeeping is very much on the minds of people here in my own mind.

00:03:20.192 --> 00:03:28.032  
<v SPEAKER\_3>I served in Pakistan a while back, and it was a tragic tale all along.

00:03:28.032 --> 00:03:41.892  
<v SPEAKER\_3>The conflict between India and Pakistan, you can blame the Brits for dividing the subcontinent in ways that were perfectly obvious after the war.

00:03:43.392 --> 00:03:52.132  
<v SPEAKER\_3>We would find in Pakistan, if we got together as embassy colleagues, and we had Pakistanis and Indians in the same room, they were fine with each other.

00:03:52.132 --> 00:04:17.072  
<v SPEAKER\_3>Everybody was conversing quite easily, but there is this dispute over boundaries in the Kashmir, and what we've seen is an attack by who knows who inside of Pakistan, people coming up and attacking, and India retaliating now, and starting exactly the tit for tat that everybody has always worried was going to happen.

00:04:17.072 --> 00:04:19.032  
<v SPEAKER\_3>They are nuclear powers.

00:04:19.032 --> 00:04:27.412  
<v SPEAKER\_3>Canada is blamed somewhat for being a part of that through can do reactor sales way back when.

00:04:27.612 --> 00:04:31.452  
<v SPEAKER\_3>There are deep wounds inside Global Affairs Canada.

00:04:31.452 --> 00:04:36.072

<v SPEAKER\_3>I know myself personally from trying to do a re-engagement strategy with India.

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<v SPEAKER\_3>How deep those wounds are and finding pathways to engage both countries has been a really important challenge and a difficult one.

00:04:46.712 --> 00:04:54.752

<v SPEAKER\_3>Pakistan is fairly close to China, and India traditionally has had border disputes with China as well.

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<v SPEAKER\_3>China has helped build Pakistan's port at Gwadar.

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<v SPEAKER\_3>They were involved as well in competing for a mining project that Canada had up in Baluchistan, around copper and gold.

00:05:06.952 --> 00:05:08.652

<v SPEAKER\_3>It was a joint project.

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<v SPEAKER\_3>Canada has some involvement there, but this history is a long one, and we've got some other people on the pod podcast who are more deeply imbued of the details of that.

00:05:20.372 --> 00:05:23.432

<v SPEAKER\_3>I think we should pitch it over to them.

00:05:23.432 --> 00:05:25.432

<v SPEAKER\_1>Mariam, let me turn to you.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>Randolph has given us the context of what's going on, particularly from a Canadian perspective.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>But I wonder if you could go a bit more into what the Kashmir dispute is all about and why it has been so long running, and also who gains from this kind of terrorist activity that we've seen last week, which has escalated into the military confrontation between the two countries.

00:05:51.672 --> 00:05:52.952

<v SPEAKER\_4>Right.

00:05:52.952 --> 00:05:57.932

<v SPEAKER\_4>Kashmir is a long-standing issue since 1947 between India and Pakistan.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>The two countries have gone to war with each other at least three times in 1948, 1965, and in 1971, although that was not directly related to Kashmir, but then in 1999 again.

00:06:12.992 --> 00:06:36.992

<v SPEAKER\_4>And I think the major problem for both India and Pakistan is that even though these current attacks are not necessarily threatening the existence of India and Pakistan, the fact that, you know, the credibility of both India and Pakistan is at stake with respect to Kashmir.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>So neither side actually needs a conflict in Kashmir, but neither side is willing to back down either because of this issue of credibility.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>And the credibility dates back to the 1947 partition of India that I think Randolph might have spoken to.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>The other importance of Kashmir is, of course, strategic, right?

00:07:00.972 --> 00:07:05.572

<v SPEAKER\_4>This is where the headwaters of the river Indus that feeds Pakistan flows from.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>This is where the water security debate can very easily be militarized by both India and Pakistan with respect to Kashmir, but also very close to Kashmir is a disputed border between China and India.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>So given that these are three nuclear armed countries, Kashmir actually is a very, very important and critical geostrategic flashpoint for India and Pakistan.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>Now, the two things that have happened in Kashmir of late that is resulting in the momentum of the episodic standoffs between India and Pakistan include the revocation of Article 317, India's constitution that has stripped Kashmir from having special autonomy within the Indian constitution, and also has allowed outsiders to come and buy land in Kashmir, buy property in Kashmir in order to change

the demographic Muslim majority population of Kashmir.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>The second thing is that India has been asking for a renegotiation and review of the Indus Water Treaty since 2024, and this current conflict has allowed India to go ahead and suspend that treaty.

00:08:33.232 --> 00:08:42.472

<v SPEAKER\_4>Both these moves by the Modi government have actually resulted in this current conflagration that we find ourselves in.

00:08:42.472 --> 00:08:46.552

<v SPEAKER\_1>Mariam, the water issue is one that most people are not aware of.

00:08:47.072 --> 00:08:49.692

<v SPEAKER\_1>Why is it important to this?

00:08:49.892 --> 00:08:53.212

<v SPEAKER\_1>And what does the suspension mean for Pakistan?

00:08:53.212 --> 00:09:01.692

<v SPEAKER\_1>Because I presume the water provides perhaps hydro as well as the waters for agriculture and drinking.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>Absolutely.

00:09:03.212 --> 00:09:09.772

<v SPEAKER\_4>You have to take into account that both India and Pakistan have major demographic needs.

00:09:09.772 --> 00:09:13.332

<v SPEAKER\_4>So Pakistan has a population of about 250 million.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>India, on the other hand, has outstripped China.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>Now is the world's most populated country with 1.6 billion.

00:09:19.992 --> 00:09:22.552

<v SPEAKER\_4>So both countries desperately need water.

00:09:22.552 --> 00:09:33.612

<v SPEAKER\_4>And as you mentioned, for agricultural purposes, for industry and also generally for overall sustenance.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>Now, why Kashmir is so critical to this is because the major river system that feeds Pakistan is the river Indus.

00:09:43.352 --> 00:09:51.572

<v SPEAKER\_4>The headwaters of this river start in Kashmir and India is upstream to Pakistan.

00:09:51.572 --> 00:10:07.632

<v SPEAKER\_4>So if India were to suspend the Indus Water Treaty, it could in fact dam up the river so that the waters would not flow into Pakistan and divert the waters for its own needs in Northern India.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>This would be devastating for the Pakistani economy and for the Pakistani population.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>Now, river Indus as it flows into Pakistan has five major tributaries that run through the province of Punjab and eventually flow out into the Arabian Sea, into the Indian Ocean.

00:10:27.792 --> 00:10:37.932

<v SPEAKER\_4>Now these rivers, the waters of these rivers have been shared for the Indus Water Treaty that was signed between India and Pakistan back in 1960.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>This was a treaty that was negotiated by technocrats.

00:10:44.192 --> 00:10:52.892

<v SPEAKER\_4>And the reason why this treaty was so successful and has been successful is because water was not securitized in that conversation.

00:10:52.892 --> 00:11:02.032

<v SPEAKER\_4>Water was treated as an essential commodity that both India and Pakistan needed.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>And that sharing of this resource was absolutely critical to both countries' economies.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>And this treaty, despite peace talks, constantly failing between India and Pakistan, has held through up until now, where India has gone ahead and suspended the treaty.

00:11:19.732 --> 00:11:22.012

<v SPEAKER\_1>Dina, who gains from all of this?

00:11:22.012 --> 00:11:25.812

<v SPEAKER\_1>I mean, this strikes me that this has always been a precarious peace.

00:11:25.812 --> 00:11:30.392

<v SPEAKER\_1>There's been problems, as Mariam has pointed out, and Randolph has sketched the broader history.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>But why do you want to continue, given the consequences that we're already seeing, the military confrontation between two nuclear armed states?

00:11:42.612 --> 00:11:45.292

<v SPEAKER\_1>Who gains from this?

00:11:45.292 --> 00:11:46.032

<v SPEAKER\_2>Thanks, Colin.

00:11:46.032 --> 00:11:51.172

<v SPEAKER\_2>Maybe before I go into that, let me just add to the context that my colleagues so helpfully have provided.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>I mean, I think it's important to put on the table that this is the most serious escalation in tensions and violence that we've seen between India and Pakistan in decades.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So and the risks for further escalations are also quite serious because as we're recording this conversation here on May 8th, we're kind of now beyond the regular tit for tat series of escalation that we saw in 2019.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So we're continuing to see shelling and drone attacks on both sides and obviously with devastating implications for civilians on the ground, but also for potential regional escalation.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So I think that's important.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>It's also important to underline that this current crisis, notwithstanding the long history dating back to 1947, has been precipitated because of the attack on April 22nd in India, administered Kashmir.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And that attack did shock India deeply both because of who was targeted, 26 civilians, the 2019 attack involved obviously military personnel, not less problematic, but in terms of images and how that's been received among the population.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>This was seen as really devastating.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>It was hitting the tourist industry, something that India has been trying to promote in an effort to quote unquote normalize life and economic development in Kashmir or Indian side of Kashmir.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And that I think again also really undermines sort of the agenda of Prime Minister Modi and his government.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So Indian response has been forceful.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>We were all anticipating it in the two weeks since then.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>But what transpired two days ago was surprising in its scale and force and aggressiveness.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>While at the same time, of course, India had been messaging that it's going to do something measured and something that's not escalatory.

00:13:36.472 --> 00:13:42.652

<v SPEAKER\_2>India is also engaged in quite a robust diplomatic efforts behind the scene, trying to sort of explain what it's doing.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>And we're in a sense, not only kind of an murky situation where not all information is clear, just from a perspective of a fog of war, but also the two sides are engaged in a competing narrative battle as well.

00:13:55.652 --> 00:14:02.892

<v SPEAKER\_2>I mean, the information coming out of Islamabad and New Delhi now is completely sort of opposite each other, and it's very difficult to make sense of it.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>So I think all of that is relevant.

00:14:04.812 --> 00:14:14.232

<v SPEAKER\_2>In terms of who gains from it, obviously neither Pakistan nor India wants this, and neither is in a position to afford a full scale conflict.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>For India, certainly, it's been desperately trying to get itself out of this hyphenated position of India-Pakistan, of this continental divisions, and really focus much more on its global ambitions as a rising power.

00:14:29.012 --> 00:14:38.672

<v SPEAKER\_2>The people who gain are obviously militants, people who are interested in destabilizing the situation, who are interested in dragging these two countries into further conflict.

00:14:38.672 --> 00:14:44.652

<v SPEAKER\_2>Obviously, there is a murky and long history of terrorist organizations in the region.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>India points at Pakistan, Pakistan denies responsibility.

00:14:50.972 --> 00:14:55.892

<v SPEAKER\_2>It's complicated, but suffice to say that people in India and Pakistan don't gain from it.

00:14:55.892 --> 00:14:59.012

<v SPEAKER\_2>Neither government wants it or can afford it right now.

00:14:59.012 --> 00:15:09.412

<v SPEAKER\_2>Obviously, this comes at a time when the globe cannot afford another major conflict, given that we already have Ukraine, Middle East, Sudan and others.

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<v SPEAKER\_2>That's another thing, and I hope we can speak about that too, in terms of the lack of bandwidth on the international stage to deal with this potential escalation.

00:15:20.232 --> 00:15:23.652

<v SPEAKER\_5>Hi, I'm Dave Perry, the president and CEO of the Canadian Global Affairs Institute.

00:15:23.652 --> 00:15:28.252

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00:15:43.312 --> 00:15:56.992

<v SPEAKER\_1>Well, let's move into that lack of bandwidth, because we've had at least reports that the UN and China and the United States have offered to mediate, but how much room there is and how much weight there is behind that.

00:15:56.992 --> 00:16:07.252

<v SPEAKER\_1>Randolph, why don't you start off and give us a sense of the two superpowers and the United Nations, bodies you would normally turn to in this kind of situation.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>But all three have other challenges and weaknesses.

00:16:14.532 --> 00:16:15.472

<v SPEAKER\_3>You're absolutely right.

00:16:15.532 --> 00:16:19.892

<v SPEAKER\_3>I think Mariam has described it very well.

00:16:20.472 --> 00:16:22.972

<v SPEAKER\_3>It's a perplexing thing.

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<v SPEAKER\_3>There isn't a lot of bandwidth on the American front because they're so tied up in knots over so many other different foreign policy impulses.

00:16:33.392 --> 00:16:53.172

<v SPEAKER\_3>When I sat and talked with President Zardari for an hour when I presented my credentials way back when, ironically, what he said his highest aspiration was to have an India-Pakistan border relationship, modernized with trade going back and forth.

00:16:53.172 --> 00:16:56.552

<v SPEAKER\_3>That was something like the Canada-US border.

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<v SPEAKER\_3>That was a pretty lofty aspiration.

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<v SPEAKER\_3>He was asking for information on how we did it.

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<v SPEAKER\_3>Where do you begin to describe the complexity of relations between two neighbors?

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<v SPEAKER\_3>We couldn't have foreseen where we would be in the modern era over the Canada-US relationship.

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<v SPEAKER\_3>But that's another story.

00:17:17.892 --> 00:17:22.852

<v SPEAKER\_3>They have problems over most favored nation status and that sort of thing.

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<v SPEAKER\_3>Diplomacy between the two has been as awkward as our diplomacy with each of them, and that speaks to the entire world's diplomacy of dealing with India, and Pakistan.

00:17:38.992 --> 00:17:53.952

<v SPEAKER\_3>Whenever you look at the matrix of possibilities of who gains from this and who started it, and you think of militants, behind and underneath the word militants are a lot of possibilities.

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<v SPEAKER\_3>And we learned this in Afghanistan.

00:17:55.552 --> 00:17:59.972

<v SPEAKER\_3>I headed the Afghanistan Task Force for a year on the civilian side.

00:17:59.972 --> 00:18:13.992

<v SPEAKER\_3>And the vexing problem of dealing with the Taliban was, you know, what under what underlay that in the Pakistani intelligence community and the permeability of that border there.

00:18:13.992 --> 00:18:22.992

<v SPEAKER\_3>So on the India side, they have a problem that's different, but there are people with very different interests who could well be behind this.

00:18:23.072 --> 00:18:24.832

<v SPEAKER\_3>There are also geopolitical interests.

00:18:24.832 --> 00:18:34.692

<v SPEAKER\_3>There are some who might want to create further distractions for the United States or China for that matter, just because there's confusion elsewhere.

00:18:34.692 --> 00:18:43.532

<v SPEAKER\_3>So if you really wanted to unpack the range of possibilities, it's limited only by our imaginations, and you can go down quite a rabbit hole.

00:18:43.532 --> 00:18:51.452

<v SPEAKER\_3>And it sounds like conspiracy, but there's some reality down in that strange, strange nether world of India-Pakistan relations.

00:18:52.132 --> 00:18:56.512

<v SPEAKER\_3>So doing diplomacy there is, I think it's a little premature.

00:18:56.512 --> 00:19:03.652

<v SPEAKER\_3>We should be talking, but they're going to have to go back and forth a little bit, and let's hope we stop them before they go nuclear.

00:19:03.652 --> 00:19:04.472

<v SPEAKER\_1>Well, thanks, Randolph.

00:19:04.472 --> 00:19:19.472

<v SPEAKER\_1>Mariam, you've talked about China and the challenges with India, the border dispute, and which flared into actual armed conflict a couple of years ago with, it almost sounded like sticks and stones and medieval conflict going on.

00:19:19.472 --> 00:19:21.792

<v SPEAKER\_1>And so China's offered to mediate.

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<v SPEAKER\_1>My guess is that that isn't going to be particularly welcome by the Indian side, but perhaps I'm wrong.

00:19:28.272 --> 00:19:33.872

<v SPEAKER\_1>The United States, which is many other preoccupations, mostly domestic right now.

00:19:33.872 --> 00:19:42.752

<v SPEAKER\_1>And then, of course, the UN, which has not been, seemed to be effective in Ukraine or Gaza or Sudan or other places.

00:19:43.332 --> 00:19:48.032

<v SPEAKER\_1>Who, in your estimation, could be helpful and useful now?

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<v SPEAKER\_4>Look, this war does not suit the United States or China, but really, do they have the power to mediate or even manipulate the

conflict?

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<v SPEAKER\_4>I don't think so, because I think with China, there's a huge conflict of interest.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>China has already come out saying that it really is concerned about Pakistan's territorial sovereignty, that Pakistan is its all-weather ally, that it will take a stand in this particular conflict, especially if the acts of aggression from the Indian side are not proportional.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>So China should not be the one to be mediating this conflict at all.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>The United States does not have the bandwidth to mediate this particular conflict, because they have not even sent envoys to South Asia, and the lack of diplomatic envoys in in South Asia right now is really hurting America's ability to exercise any kind of leadership at this point in time.

00:20:53.032 --> 00:21:02.732

<v SPEAKER\_4>The United Kingdom is seen as an erstwhile colonial power that led to this chaos in the first place, or at least that is how it's perceived in Pakistan and India.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>And I'm not sure that their intervention will be welcomed either by either side.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>Then there are other players, lower-level players like Saudi Arabia, Iran, Qatar, Malaysia, who also all have their own interests and their own positions with respect to India and Pakistan.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>The tricky thing about this particular escalation in 2025 is that it is different from what has happened in the past.

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<v SPEAKER\_4>And the difference really lies in the fact that both Pakistan and India right now have very jingoistic domestic political constituencies who are interested in seeing some kind of action from either side.

00:21:44.892 --> 00:21:51.152

<v SPEAKER\_4>And on the other hand, you have two countries with very

hyper nationalist foreign policies.

00:21:51.712 --> 00:21:53.752

<v SPEAKER\_4>Let me explain that very quickly.

00:21:53.792 --> 00:22:15.232

<v SPEAKER\_4>In Pakistan, Chief of Army Staff Aseem Munir is quite different from the previous general, General Bajwa, who was taking the Pakistani military in a slightly more Pacific direction, in that he said the Pakistani military could not afford to get into a war with India, given the country's economic state and so on.

00:22:15.232 --> 00:22:26.272

<v SPEAKER\_4>However, Aseem Munir right now needs a win, and he needs a win because this is an embattled Chief of Army Staff who wants to reassert the military's control over civilian political leaders.

00:22:26.272 --> 00:22:36.132

<v SPEAKER\_4>He also wants to reclaim some of the military's institutional reputation that has taken a severe hit in its confrontation with ex-Prime Minister Imran Khan's Pakistan Tariq-e-Insaf.

00:22:36.132 --> 00:22:49.592

<v SPEAKER\_4>This is a man who wants to establish his own legacy, but also wants to reclaim that institutional reputation of the military, which has always been seen to be a protector of Pakistan's democracy, a guardian, if you will.

00:22:50.812 --> 00:22:54.192

<v SPEAKER\_4>And that is not how it's perceived currently by Pakistan's population.

00:22:54.192 --> 00:22:57.312

<v SPEAKER\_4>So I think Asemani would want to reclaim some of that.

00:22:57.312 --> 00:23:10.512

<v SPEAKER\_4>On the Indian side, Prime Minister Narendra Modi is, of course, pandering to his base, which is Hindu nationalist, and which is at this point in time very hyper nationalist.

00:23:10.512 --> 00:23:23.252

<v SPEAKER\_4>Modi is much more confident than he was back in 2019, when the last major conflagration between India and Pakistan broke out in Pulwama.

00:23:23.252 --> 00:23:26.572

<v SPEAKER\_4>And Modi is confident in Indian strength.

00:23:26.572 --> 00:23:28.632

<v SPEAKER\_4>He is confident in the Indian economy.

00:23:28.632 --> 00:23:38.632

<v SPEAKER\_4>He is confident in the fact that India, as far as global firepower, or for that matter, even the quantitative strength of military personnel, can overcome the Pakistani military.

00:23:39.292 --> 00:24:02.512

<v SPEAKER\_4>Now, because the Indian government could have taken covert action in response to this particular attack in Pehelgan, instead, it chose not to go for that covert action because it did not necessarily satisfy the public demand for action that Modi is facing.

00:24:02.512 --> 00:24:08.612

<v SPEAKER\_4>I think also the hubris on the Indian side is propelling some of this conflict forward.

00:24:09.152 --> 00:24:15.092

<v SPEAKER\_4>I think the question that we should be asking right now is, what should either side do?

00:24:15.092 --> 00:24:33.232

<v SPEAKER\_4>Should Pakistan satisfy itself for having so-called downing Indian jets and drones, and say that that response is proportional, or are we going to be in a situation where both sides continue to escalate this conflict further?

00:24:33.232 --> 00:24:35.692

<v SPEAKER\_1>I think that is a decisive question.

00:24:35.692 --> 00:24:41.392

<v SPEAKER\_1>My final question, I'm going to ask you to lead on this, Vina, is what are the Canadian interests at stake here?

00:24:41.392 --> 00:24:50.352

<v SPEAKER\_1>We've got our Indo-Pacific strategy, although it's probably up for a redo now that we have a new Prime Minister and new government.

00:24:50.352 --> 00:24:52.092

<v SPEAKER\_1>We have ties of Commonwealth.

00:24:52.092 --> 00:24:54.232

<v SPEAKER\_1>We're hosting the G7 this year.

00:24:54.232 --> 00:24:56.232

<v SPEAKER\_1>Is there a role for us?

00:24:57.392 --> 00:24:57.972

<v SPEAKER\_2>Absolutely.



00:24:57.972 --> 00:24:58.592  
<v SPEAKER\_2>Thanks, Colin.

00:24:58.592 --> 00:25:13.952  
<v SPEAKER\_2>I think just to add, we are the G7 presidency and you mentioned that in the current moment, there doesn't seem to be bandwidth or appetite on the part of great powers or credibility on the part of some, in the case of China, to be able to do something.

00:25:13.952 --> 00:25:18.152  
<v SPEAKER\_2>The question becomes, is there something that Canada can do through the G7?

00:25:18.152 --> 00:25:26.232  
<v SPEAKER\_2>I think something as a statement is likely and we'll probably see that, but whether or not that will make any difference is hard to say.

00:25:26.232 --> 00:25:33.292  
<v SPEAKER\_2>Likely, my own sense would be that it won't make any difference for all the reasons that Mariam helpfully has outlined.

00:25:33.292 --> 00:25:42.072  
<v SPEAKER\_2>We are in a very different moment now in 2025 than we were even in 2019, when the last such escalation happened and it was also under President Trump, incidentally.

00:25:42.072 --> 00:25:44.712  
<v SPEAKER\_2>But the US then was much more involved.

00:25:44.712 --> 00:25:55.792  
<v SPEAKER\_2>Now with lack of envoys, lack of appetite to do something and the fact that neither, certainly New Delhi is not in a position to really, in a place to really listen to external pressure.

00:25:55.792 --> 00:26:04.892  
<v SPEAKER\_2>I think de-escalation would only happen if both sides can satisfy that they have met their objectives that they can essentially walk away with honor intact.

00:26:05.412 --> 00:26:12.872  
<v SPEAKER\_2>And a lot of the kind of the messaging on the ground at the moment is actually quite nationalistic and doesn't leave so much space for that.

00:26:12.872 --> 00:26:13.952  
<v SPEAKER\_2>But of course that can change.

00:26:13.952 --> 00:26:19.652

<v SPEAKER\_2>So I think we will see de-escalation of both sides can say they've achieved their objectives.

00:26:19.652 --> 00:26:22.912

<v SPEAKER\_2>I think for India and Pakistan, they both can do that at the moment.

00:26:22.912 --> 00:26:35.712

<v SPEAKER\_2>Although again, we have entered now a territory which is beyond just the kind of the back and forth to put out and I think it's like if this continues in the next few days, then escalation ladder again is possible.

00:26:35.712 --> 00:26:38.232

<v SPEAKER\_2>In terms of Canadian interests of this, sorry.

00:26:38.232 --> 00:26:39.992

<v SPEAKER\_1>Please go ahead.

00:26:39.992 --> 00:26:54.212

<v SPEAKER\_2>In terms of Canadian interests, obviously there's 2.5 or so million Canadians with roots to South Asia who obviously see this as very much a personal tragedy that they have loved ones and family and potentially harms way.

00:26:54.212 --> 00:26:57.972

<v SPEAKER\_2>So I mean, there's obviously real concerns from that perspective.

00:26:57.972 --> 00:27:03.872

<v SPEAKER\_2>We're also in a position where we were considering rebuilding or resetting our relationships with India.

00:27:03.872 --> 00:27:07.372

<v SPEAKER\_2>As you mentioned, the Indo-Pacific strategy, India was noted as a critical partner.

00:27:07.372 --> 00:27:12.372

<v SPEAKER\_2>But of course, in the last two years, the relationship has been challenged.

00:27:12.372 --> 00:27:19.772

<v SPEAKER\_2>We're in a diplomatic crisis, our own issues to resolve with India, which we do see strategically important for the Indo-Pacific strategy.

00:27:19.772 --> 00:27:25.712

<v SPEAKER\_2>But so how this plays out and the messaging that Canada has on this will matter.

00:27:25.712 --> 00:27:29.272

<v SPEAKER\_2>If you note in terms of the statements that came out, there's a slight difference.

00:27:29.652 --> 00:27:32.892

<v SPEAKER\_2>Everybody is calling for de-escalation, restrained.

00:27:32.892 --> 00:27:50.072

<v SPEAKER\_2>But France, for instance, in its statement, began with noting that India has the right to defend itself against terrorism, sort of condemning terrorism, same thing from Japan, same thing from Australia, whereas China begins by saying that it finds the actions by India regrettable.

00:27:50.072 --> 00:28:07.292

<v SPEAKER\_2>So I think India will be watching closely to see whether the formulation coming out of Ottawa, which Ottawa has not said anything, incidentally, or others have, will kind of mirror the language from the US, Europe, Australia, Japan, or whether it will sort of be more muted on that front.

00:28:07.292 --> 00:28:13.832

<v SPEAKER\_2>I think that would matter in terms of our own roadmap for resetting relations with India.

00:28:13.832 --> 00:28:14.552

<v SPEAKER\_1>Thanks, Randolph.

00:28:14.552 --> 00:28:18.852

<v SPEAKER\_1>I'm going to give you the last word, given your experience with the Afghan Task Force and stuff.

00:28:18.852 --> 00:28:23.372

<v SPEAKER\_1>You know how difficult it is to try and be useful or helpful.

00:28:23.372 --> 00:28:25.372

<v SPEAKER\_1>Is there any role for us?

00:28:25.372 --> 00:28:26.072

<v SPEAKER\_3>I think there is.

00:28:27.212 --> 00:28:42.832

<v SPEAKER\_3>If we had an exemption, which we don't, we would either unilaterally or after a call with our G7 colleagues as the host, we would deploy an envoy to visit the two capitals to have talks.

00:28:43.472 --> 00:29:01.892

<v SPEAKER\_3>Just characterized as that, we would take a former ambassador or a foreign minister or something and send her out there

and have talks and be in a listening mode and report back to the G7 and try to tie the G7 into that conversation and get something going.

00:29:01.892 --> 00:29:03.112

<v SPEAKER\_3>Something has to get going.

00:29:03.612 --> 00:29:07.532

<v SPEAKER\_3>It's great to sit around and say, well, Russia can't do it, China can't do it, nobody can do it.

00:29:07.772 --> 00:29:12.392

<v SPEAKER\_3>So step forward, let's have a little bit of foreign policy activism like we used to have.

00:29:12.792 --> 00:29:17.752

<v SPEAKER\_3>I find it very frustrating how Canada kind of wrings its hands and says, well, we can't do it.

00:29:18.852 --> 00:29:22.192

<v SPEAKER\_3>We have an inferiority complex like you wouldn't believe.

00:29:22.192 --> 00:29:22.872

<v SPEAKER\_1>Well, take Mr.

00:29:22.872 --> 00:29:26.772

<v SPEAKER\_1>Crony of his word who said that if America won't lead, Canada will.

00:29:26.772 --> 00:29:30.072

<v SPEAKER\_1>This sounds like an opportunity, as you've pointed out.

00:29:30.072 --> 00:29:30.752

<v SPEAKER\_1>Thank you all.

00:29:30.752 --> 00:29:36.732

<v SPEAKER\_1>My last question as always, and I'll start with you, Mariam, what are you reading or streaming these days?

00:29:36.732 --> 00:29:48.992

<v SPEAKER\_4>Well, I'm reading a lot about the 2024 election in Pakistan because I'm currently trying to finish a manuscript, a book manuscript on that.

00:29:48.992 --> 00:29:58.012

<v SPEAKER\_4>So that's top of mind for me, which is why I think taking into account the domestic political constituencies in both India and Pakistan is so important to understand this conflict.

00:29:58.012 --> 00:29:58.352

<v SPEAKER\_1>Perfect.

00:29:58.352 --> 00:30:02.432

<v SPEAKER\_1>Well, we'll look forward to, and you'll have to tell us when the book comes out.

00:30:02.432 --> 00:30:05.712

<v SPEAKER\_1>Vina, what are you reading or streaming these days?

00:30:05.712 --> 00:30:10.332

<v SPEAKER\_2>Colin, I finally gotten around to reading Bob Lighthizer's book, No Trade is Free.

00:30:10.332 --> 00:30:24.672

<v SPEAKER\_2>I have to say, it's an easy read, but it has been quite enlightening in understanding the genesis of the actions we're seeing President Trump and his administration implementing right now on the trade front.

00:30:24.672 --> 00:30:26.492

<v SPEAKER\_1>No Trade is Free, Bob Lighthizer.

00:30:26.492 --> 00:30:28.252

<v SPEAKER\_1>Yes, highly recommended.

00:30:29.152 --> 00:30:32.352

<v SPEAKER\_1>You, Randolph, what are you reading or streaming?

00:30:32.352 --> 00:30:48.272

<v SPEAKER\_3>I'm reading mostly board materials, hundreds of pages of very turgid pensions and actuarial material, as well as we're actually developing some very exciting AI tools for the Canadian legal sector and the Federation of Law Society.

00:30:48.272 --> 00:30:52.952

<v SPEAKER\_3>So I'm deeply, deeply ensconced in that process.

00:30:52.952 --> 00:30:58.052

<v SPEAKER\_3>And it's fascinating, but not much time for reading books casually on the side.

00:30:58.052 --> 00:31:02.112

<v SPEAKER\_1>Well, you've got Lighthizer now on your trip home to Canada.

00:31:02.152 --> 00:31:02.952

<v SPEAKER\_1>Thank you all.

00:31:02.952 --> 00:31:03.992

<v SPEAKER\_2>It's an easy read.

00:31:03.992 --> 00:31:04.652

<v SPEAKER\_2>Thank you.

00:31:04.652 --> 00:31:05.872

<v SPEAKER\_1>Yes, you're Vina.

00:31:05.872 --> 00:31:06.732

<v SPEAKER\_1>You're right.

00:31:06.732 --> 00:31:08.032

<v SPEAKER\_1>And I do recommend it as well.

00:31:08.032 --> 00:31:08.692

<v SPEAKER\_1>I think it is.

00:31:08.692 --> 00:31:13.052

<v SPEAKER\_1>It's a good insight into especially where Trump is coming from on tariffs.

00:31:13.052 --> 00:31:15.952

<v SPEAKER\_1>Well, thank you for listening to this episode of The Global Exchange.

00:31:15.952 --> 00:31:17.292

<v SPEAKER\_1>We were joined today by Dr.

00:31:17.292 --> 00:31:22.592

<v SPEAKER\_1>Mariam Mufti and CGAI fellows, Randolph Mank and Vina Nadjibulla.

00:31:22.592 --> 00:31:27.052

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00:31:27.052 --> 00:31:35.412

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00:31:35.412 --> 00:31:36.892

<v SPEAKER\_1>I'm Colin Robertson.

00:31:36.892 --> 00:31:38.932

<v SPEAKER\_1>Thanks for joining us today on The Global Exchange.