

Is India Preparing to Unleash “Weapons of Mass Migration” in Kashmir?

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The planned deployment of 20,000 more paramilitary forces in occupied Kashmir has raised serious concern among the locals that India is preparing to rescind Article 35A ahead of the country's upcoming independence day celebrations next month, which would allow non-residents to purchase property in the region and possibly lead to the disruptive large-scale influx of foreigners along the lines of Ivy League scholar Kelly M. Greenhill's "Weapons of Mass Migration" model.

A Military Deployment For Political Ends

The indigenous population of [Indian-occupied Kashmir](#) is becoming seriously concerned that New Delhi is preparing to rescind Article 35A [ahead of the country's upcoming independence day celebrations](#) next month following the [planned deployment of 20,000 more paramilitary forces](#) to the region. The aforementioned provision bars non-residents from purchasing property there, which was thought at the time to be a clever tactic for quelling pro-independence unrest following India's occupation of the formerly independent country. Popular international political commentator and former Indian diplomat Melkulangara Bhadrakumar, however, revealed in a [recent op-ed](#) curiously published just a few days before the phased deployment began that “the Modi government plans to integrate J&K by divesting or eroding some of its so-called ‘special status’”, hinting that there might be some credence to the locals' concerns given that such a well-connected individual as Mr. Bhadrakumar himself thought it fitting to publicly make his “reasonable guess” at such a coincidental time.

No Comparison To China

Should this scenario come to pass, then it could dangerously lead to the disruptive large-scale influx of foreigners along the lines of Ivy League scholar Kelly M. Greenhill's [“Weapons of Mass Migration”](#) model whereby demographic changes in a targeted area are triggered and/or manipulated by certain actors for strategic ends. The Indian government no doubt considers occupied Kashmir to be what it terms as an “integral part of the country” despite its internationally disputed status and previous UNSC Resolutions being passed in the past demanding that the locals be allowed to hold a plebiscite on their political status, which is why it would frame events as a “purely internal matter” and might even provocatively attempt to draw comparisons to the situations in China's Tibet and Xinjiang Autonomous Regions in order to deflect criticism (though doing so might also counterproductively provoke its own separate criticism from other quarters). Such a comparison would be very deceptive, however, since both Chinese regions are universally recognized components of

the People's Republic whereas Kashmir isn't regarded the same way vis-a-vis India.

The Khalistan Factor

This means that the large-scale movement of Han and other Chinese from elsewhere in the People's Republic to Tibet and Xinjiang is by legal definition a purely internal matter, whereas the large-scale movement of Indians to Kashmir is a purely international one because of the region's UN-recognized status as a disputed territory. India's motivations in curtailing some of Kashmir's "autonomy" at this specific moment might also stem from the [increasingly popular Khalistan movement](#) in neighboring Punjab, which has revived interest in the [revolutionary 1973 Anandpur Sahib Resolution's](#) decentralization principles and could eventually [form the core of an alternative national vision](#) to the [ruling Hindutva one](#). It could partially be because of those fast-moving developments that the Indian government is panicking and wants to gradually remove as much of the occupied Kashmiris' "autonomy" as possible in order to preempt the scenario of the other minority-majority regions under its control demanding similar rights as well after becoming reacquainted with the aforementioned manifesto and realizing that there's no reason why they can't have their own special status too.

A Dangerous Mistake

As the Modi government has been prone to do over the past half-decade, this speculated policy would represent yet another massive mistake if it's ever implemented. Not only has the planned military deployment already generated intense talk about occupied Kashmir's "autonomy" — thus negating the possible purpose of keeping such discourse out of the national discussion following the revival of the Khalistan movement — but it could also lead to more forceful resistance from the locals who fear an impending demographic invasion of "Weapons of Mass Migration". Modi clearly wants to deliver on his party's [recent election promise](#) to eliminate Articles 370 and 35A granting "autonomy" to Kashmir and the right to residents to be the sole purchasers of property in the occupied region respectively, but the blind devotion to electioneering rhetoric could prove to be extremely dangerous in this context because of the high likelihood that it'll backfire by drawing intense international condemnation and possibly even provoking uncontrollable violence.

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