

## WORLD AND VALLEY

Relevant for: International Relations | Topic: UNO and its various Agencies

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Last week, Delhi fended off a vigorous Chinese attempt at getting the United Nations Security Council to pronounce, after more than five decades, on the situation in Jammu and Kashmir. But it is too early to celebrate. For, Pakistan's campaign to draw the international community into the Kashmir question has just begun. When the government surprised the nation and the world by revoking the special status of J&K and bifurcated the state into union territories, the internationalisation of the issues was central to Pakistan's furious response. China has been an eager accomplice. The resolute support from the US and France to the Indian position that the political rearrangement of J&K was an "internal matter" prevented a formal discussion and a potential statement or resolution at the UNSC. Russia, which had exercised its veto in favour of India during the Cold War years when Kashmir was on the UNSC agenda, insisted that the problems between India and Pakistan must be resolved bilaterally. Britain, apparently, tilted towards the Chinese view that the UNSC must issue a statement.

Although the weight of collective opinion at the UNSC was in India's favour, Delhi knows it has a prolonged diplomatic challenge at hand. Delhi can easily dismiss Islamabad's claim that the very fact that there were consultations on the Kashmir question at the UNSC is a political triumph for Pakistan. But India can't ignore Islamabad's declared intention to keep returning to the UNSC with China's support. How the UNSC might respond the next time will depend on the ground situation in Kashmir.

Any breakdown of law and order in the Kashmir Valley and Delhi's use of force against civilians will certainly weaken international support for India. Any serious escalation of military tensions with Pakistan on the LoC could be seen as a "threat to international peace and security" and provide the basis for the UNSC's political intervention. India then faces a three-fold attack from the Pakistan-China strategic axis. Pakistan is likely to unleash its proxies to trigger violence in the Valley. It may also raise the military temperature on the LoC. China has signalled its intent to bring its full weight to bear at the UNSC against India. Delhi may have no time to contemplate a fourth dimension — of Beijing's potential to open a second military front on its long and contested borders with India. After all, Beijing has accused Delhi of "challenging China's sovereign interests" by altering the internal political status quo in Kashmir. The accusation might have no basis in reality, but it underlines China's deepening political hostility towards India. If Delhi can't afford to underestimate the challenges — domestic, trans-border and international — arising from its Kashmir move, it also knows that failure on any front is not an option.

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