From legalism to realism in Kashmir: internationalising the line of control
Needless to say, these are high hopes for two regions increasingly distinguished by factionalism ever since the Line of Control was drawn in the sand. These hopes may well be dashed if the various ethnic and religious groups within the boundaries of the independent Kashmiri state begin to feel that their government is more secular in theory than in practice. Kashmir, however independent, is unlikely to flourish if independence simply internalizes the battle lines defined by colonial and postcolonial boundaries to date. In addition to questioning the wisdom of reunification, the prospect of Kas... The Kashmir dispute has become increasingly layered and fragmented with territorial, legal, and political dimensions. This summer marked the third continuous summer of passionate, resolute, and unarmed protests. The response of the security forces has resulted in 110 civilian deaths since June. A first step to building trust and confidence between Pakistan and India and across the Line of Control dividing Kashmir would be to let people travel between the two countries without visa restrictions. Freedom to move, complemented by a freedom to meet, organize, and mobilize across borders would allow civil society and political activists to begin the first real dialogue in sixty years among and between Pakistanis, Indians, and Kashmiris about their common future. The realist account of international relations stresses that the possibility of peaceful change, or in fact any type of change, is limited. For a leader to rely on such an idealistic outcome would be folly. Realism is a theory that claims to explain the reality of international politics. It emphasises the constraints on politics that result from humankind’s egoistic nature and the absence of a central authority above the state. For realists, the highest goal is the survival of the state, which explains why states’ actions are judged according to the ethics of responsibility rather than by moral principles. The dominance of realism has generated a significant strand of literature criticising its main tenets.