



Episode 146: Kashmir revisited: Untold stories and hard realities

VOICEOVER

Welcome to Up Close, the research, opinion and analysis podcast from the University of Melbourne, Australia.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

I'm Elizabeth Lopez. Thanks for joining us for this episode of Up Close which is supported by the Melbourne Festival of Ideas 2011. For more information visit ideas.unimelb.edu.au. The events of 1947 when India gained independence from the British and the Muslim nation of Pakistan was born were deeply traumatic. The partition of India gave rise to the 20th Century's biggest forced migration. An estimated 10 million people were displaced and anywhere from 200,000 to 1 million died in sectarian violence.

As the British retreated they left the leaders of the so called Princely States with a stark choice; accede to either India or Pakistan. Many rulers based their decision on geography and whichever religious group formed the majority of the population. But as our guest today, Dr Christopher Snedden, argues things weren't so straightforward in Muslim majority Jammu and Kashmir, India's northernmost Princely State in the foothills of the Himalayas. And today after four India/Pakistan wars and the advent of a globalised insurgency Kashmir is a global flashpoint. India, Pakistan and China have competing territorial claims and around the world it's regarded as the most likely conflict to escalate into nuclear war.

Dr Christopher Snedden is a political strategy analyst, author and academic specialising in South Asia. He's lectured on the region at the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies in Canberra and he's worked for Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Defence Intelligence Organisation. Welcome to Up Close Christopher.

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

Good morning Liz. Thank you.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

You say the key to the region's future lies in what the people of Kashmir want but in 60 years no-one has been game to ask and you and many other observers of the region argue no-one is likely to ask. Why is that?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

Partly because India and Pakistan have hijacked the dispute to some extent. They've made it very high level where they're going to determine what the resolution to the territorial dispute over Jammu and Kashmir is. So India says because of the Maharaja's accession to us, that is India in 1947, Jammu and Kashmir is all of ours. Pakistan says you promised to plebiscite in 1947, the UN has reiterated that, we want that to be held. As a result of both of those stances and their ongoing discussions they've never felt the need or the compulsion to incorporate what the people of Jammu and Kashmir may want. And equally, those people have been separated through war and the line of control now as it's called, it used to be the ceasefire line and don't have a lot of inter-reaction so haven't been able to discuss what they would like and formulate an agreed position.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

Well, you've written a book, *The Untold Story of the People of Kashmir* which goes back to the events of 1947 but you're also a consultant dealing with the present and future of Kashmir, why is it so important for you to go back to the events of 60 years ago and what can they tell us about how to go forward?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

The book is actually called *The Untold Story of the People of Azad Kashmir*, very small correction because Azad means free and in 1947 what it meant was free from the Maharaja's control. After the Indians got involved it then became free from the Indians' control. Now the significance of this book in my opinion is that it tells us how the Kashmir dispute started. On 22 October 1947 some tribesmen from Pakistan came into the Kashmir Province, invaded and that is correct and that's what India says was the start of the Kashmir dispute. But that overlooks a serious uprising that took place in an area called Poonch and nearby Mirpur in that area that became free from the Maharaja's control and those people actually started the dispute over the international status of Jammu and Kashmir.

Now by confirming that situation which is what I believe my book does, I've used primary source evidence to do that, it actually says that these people not only instigated the dispute but they are stakeholders in that dispute and that while they had a preference either for India or Pakistan you cannot ignore the fact that they started the dispute and indeed are stakeholders.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

So how does that, I suppose, upset what India and Pakistan say in their official versions of who started what?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

It certainly contradicts the Indian one by adding this extra information that the dispute started and all of the internal issues within Jammu and Kashmir started before the Maharaja acceded to India on 26 October 1947. Funnily enough Pakistan to some extent or another has acquiesced in that Indian argument for a whole variety of reasons which are to do with the pressure and the situation in 1947/48. It actually says to them both you now need to reconsider that information and involve these

people. Not only is it their lands that you're fighting over but they also have a stake in the resolution of that particular issue.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

You suggest that there are some pretty enormous gaps in what we know about 1947, why is that?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

Well it's partly because India chose not to look at it. Interestingly India and Pakistan to some extent or another are fairly ignorant about one another and their histories. They both have versions that they believe to be true. Part of those versions are correct but they're not complete and that's one of the issues about this incident that I'm reporting in 1947 that India has chosen to ignore it because if they do look at it and give it substance if you like or credibility it weakens their position. To some extent it's the same with Pakistan, although to a much lesser extent. Pakistan has struggled with the concept of Azad Kashmir because it didn't want to accept their accession basically because by doing so it would weaken their overall position on the Kashmir dispute.

Soon after Azad Kashmir came into existence on 24 October 1947, two days before the Maharaja's accession to India, about two weeks later people in the northern areas now called Gilgit-Baltistan also mounted an insurgency and said we want to join Pakistan. There were two local rulers said we want to acceded to Pakistan and Pakistan couldn't accept those because again that would weaken their position. So that's partly why they haven't delved into that history as well.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

Jammu and Kashmir has always been a religiously fairly diverse place with Sikhs, Buddhists, Muslims and Hindus, what was life like for people just wanting to go about worshipping their own gods back in 1947?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

It was traumatic in some areas. Certainly after partition it became very difficult. There was a lot of inter-religious violence in the Jammu Province where perhaps 100,000 were killed, certainly 20,000 or 30,000 maybe is a more reliable figure and about 200,000 or 300,000, perhaps even 400,000 people, mainly Muslims, left Jammu and went to Pakistan and them and their descendents are still either in Azad Kashmir or Pakistan. Before partition, the Maharaja was a Hindu and he did not allow conversion. If you converted to Islam you had to forfeit your property. Only people who were Hindus basically were allowed to carry firearms. But that was only mainly in the Jammu Province where there was a large Hindu minority. In the Kashmir Province where 95 per cent of folks were Muslims and in the Frontier District Province which was very lightly populated and a very large province where most people were either Shias or followers of the Aga Khan, they just got on with it because there were insufficient Hindus to cause them problems. But it was a Hindu Maharaja of a Muslim majority state which was the major issue in 1947.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

Chris, can you tell us about the Lion of Kashmir?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

Yes, the Lion of Kashmir was a gentleman called Sheikh Abdullah who, to use an Australian terminology, was a mate of the first Prime Minister of India, Jawaharlal Nehru. He was a secular politician which is highly significant because the most populace area and the most homogenous area of Jammu and Kashmir was the Kashmir Valley from which the Princely State of Jammu and Kashmir took its shorthand term Kashmir. He was able to say to the Pakistanis we're not interested in joining Pakistan just because it's a state for Muslims, we have a broader outlook, we are secular and we're quite happy if it comes to the crunch to join India before joining Pakistan. Now he was secular, he renamed the Muslim Conference, the most important political party, the National Conference to reflect that secular outlook. He was a mate of Jawaharlal Nehru but he also didn't get on with Muhammad Ali Jinnah so there was more to it than just the secular aspect. But he became very popular in 1931 when he and some other Kashmiris rebelled against the Maharaja's rule and he was a young man who fought very bravely. He was a tall man as well, quite a striking man and as a result of that became known as Sher-e-Kashmir or the Lion of Kashmir and thereafter was a highly significant political figure on the Indian side of Jammu and Kashmir, imprisoned both by the Maharaja and even more so by the Indians for his stance at various times on the Kashmir dispute.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

What was the climate of religious tolerance like, I mean partition violence aside where you say that was a brief window of opportunity where people could settle old scores with their neighbours, was there a tradition of tolerance in the region?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

Yeah generally speaking throughout the subcontinent there was a tradition of religious tolerance. People just got on with their lives. Most Indians and Pakistanis still are trying to get two square meals a day. They don't really care much about what their neighbours are in terms of their religion and there are incidents from time to time but it's very worthwhile remembering that as a percentage of the population these incidents are miniscule. Although that said, in Gujarat in 2002 there were about 3000 Muslims killed which is a large number of people but as a percentage of the population you're not having incidents of violence every day. It was the same until the partition in 1947 and that movement of people that you talked about and the associated sectarian violence when people did start to discriminate based on religion and partly settle old scores, partly be bitter because of things that had happened to other members of their family and to see your family killed or the women raped. It was the women who suffered most in 1947 because they were raped, they were killed. Sometimes members of their own community would kill them so they didn't fall into the hands of the others.

After the British left and partition became a reality and there was this mass transference of population it did become a real issue and most people went through Punjab, that's where a lot of the population movements went on and one of the easiest ways to get from Punjab both east to west was via Jammu in Jammu and

Kashmir. So some of those elements went through there and they had stories to tell. That also didn't placate but encouraged further religious violence in Jammu Province. There's evidence to suggest that the Maharaja may have been involved in some of that anti-Muslim violence. Although that said, no community came out of it scot-free really in terms of Islam, Hinduism and Sikhism in 1947. The Christians and some of the lesser groups weren't affected but those three groups to some extent or another all suffered.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

This is Up Close coming to you from the University of Melbourne Australia. I'm Elizabeth Lopez and joining me in this episode is Dr Christopher Snedden and we're speaking about the Kashmir dispute. Christopher you visited the region in 2004 with your wife and conducted a lot of interviews with ordinary people there, what was the impression you took away with you about the scars that remain from the partition violence and everything since?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

Liz, that's one of the most difficult and saddest things my wife Diane and I have ever done, talking to people who were involved in the violence and we talked to people on the Pakistan side and then I went across to the Indian side and spoke to people in Jammu. The stories essentially were the same. If you substitute the religious community then you could talk about a Muslim being treated badly by Hindus or Sikhs. Go to the other side and you would hear exactly the same story in reverse. One of the most poignant experiences for me was my wife Diane and I spoke to a number of people in Sialkot which is just down the road from Jammu about 20 miles, 30 odd kilometres, impossible to get to now if you're living there. They had been forced to flee from Jammu for various reasons and their sister had been taken. They said to me knowing that I was going back to Jammu to see if I could find her and this was almost 60 years after the event.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

So this sister was abducted as many women were on both sides?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

She was abducted and they were still looking for her and it was tragic and one of the boys in that family showed me the scar on his head where he'd been slashed by a sword. Then I went to Jammu and on that side I interviewed a man from Mirpur who was a Hindu and sitting next to him was a Muslim from Jammu and they told virtually the same story, just transferring the religious community at various times and they sat there dispassionately with one another; in fact they were friends. But when they related their stories it was unbelievably moving and as I suggested earlier, all religious communities suffered in 1947 and those scars are very deep. Not necessarily personally because now people have gone back in small numbers from Pakistan to Jammu and to some extent from the Indian side to Pakistan and Azad Kashmir and places like that. But people remember that and would like some sort of restitution. They'd like to be able to see some of the places where their folks had come from and there're all of those sorts of issues as well.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

Which brings us to the issue of travel. You say that the various groups in Jammu and Kashmir don't necessarily know each other's aspirations or know who each other are all that much and one of the biggest obstacles is travel. Can you tell us about one of the journeys you took when you were over there which sounds extraordinary?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

Yeah, I used to get very frustrated because I'd be in Muzaffarabad and I knew that I wanted to go to Srinagar.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

Which is about how far away?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

I think the sign said about 130km. There's a sign on the outskirts of Muzaffarabad. Now that road has since been opened and there is limited travel between people who are considered to be state subjects of Jammu and Kashmir which means their families have lived there for long periods of time. It goes back to an act passed by the Maharaja in 1927. There are two cross Line of Control openings and there's some limited trade going on but for ferengis or foreigners as I was you can't go down that road which is about four or five hours away from Mazaffarabad to Srinagar. You've got to go back over through the hills to Islamabad and then either get a train or a bus or a flight to Lahore and then cross the border and get a train or a flight up to Jammu or Srinagar. So a trip that takes about four or five hours can take anything up to 48 hours depending on what's happening in terms of the transport and the India/Pakistan border.

The amount of knowledge that the people have about one another is probably better in Jammu and Kashmir than India and Pakistan where it's even more difficult for people to get to know one another. But the levels of ignorance are very high. Their ability to communicate with one another in a legal sense - you can cross the Line of Control but it's highly dangerous because it's heavily militarised and you may get killed in doing so - the levels of ignorance are pretty high because of all of that.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

Can you tell us about the impact of the insurgency movement that started around 1989?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

The insurgency movement did two things. Firstly it's resulted in a hell of a lot of death and upheaval. Perhaps 100,000 people in the Kashmir Valley. People who populate that area are mainly Kashmiris. A lot have been killed. I read a report today saying about 8000 have been disappeared without trace in some cases and the Indians, according to various newspapers, are calling it a police state, these newspapers saying that what India's doing there is atypical compared with the fairly exemplary democracy that exists in the rest of India. There's a lot of closed reporting, a lot of pressure on people to do various things and not do things and it's still going on. The insurgencies in 2011 in terms of the people coming across the

Line of Control they're down but it depends what's happening in Afghanistan and various other things as to what happens in Jammu and Kashmir and in reverse. On the Pakistan side what happened in Azad Kashmir was that a lot of training camps were created for these disenchanting Kashmiri youth who were genuinely disenchanting with India because of a fixed election, another rigged election, administrative reasons, economic reasons and they went across to Azad Kashmir to get trained, armed and then reinfiltred back into the Kashmir Valley; with the assistance of the Pakistan military. As a result of that though the Kashmiris also lost control of their insurgency and they talk about foreign militants and most militants now fighting the Indian forces in the Kashmir Valley are non-Kashmiri.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

So we're talking about Lashkar-e-Taiba or groups like that?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammed. There're a few others as well. The only real Kashmiri group is Hizbul Mujahideen. They're considered to be Kashmiri dominated. Almost all of the others are considered to be populated by Punjabis, Afghans, Pashtuns and various other elements who don't have a link with the Kashmir Valley except from being involved in the insurgency there.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

Chris, Kashmir has something that Pakistan wants and needs very badly which is water and the headwaters of three Pakistani rivers beginning Kashmir and Hydro is Pakistan's second source of electricity generation. One of the extraordinary aspects of this conflict is that even in times of war the commission that administers the Indus Water Treaty continued to meet and preside over the sharing of this increasingly precious resource but there are some pretty heavy pressures on this arrangement are there?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

There are some very heavy pressures on this arrangement, not necessarily of India's making though. One of the major pressures is to do with population growth. In 1947 Pakistan had abundant water on a per capita basis to water its population and to grow sufficient crops but now Pakistan's population is about 165 million; in '47 it was about 40 million roughly. Then every year they add another million to the population, the water scarcity increases. In other words there's less water per capita and that's an ongoing problem. Now partly because of that situation the Pakistanis have said to the Americans please help us sort out the Kashmir dispute and our water issues with India. Until recently they had a whole heap of things that they were talking about in a composite dialogue; the Mumbai terrorist incidents in 2008 have stopped those discussions.

But there were a number of those that were to do with water; water sharing mainly. India's been building a dam called Baglihar Dam on the Chenab River which Pakistan has disliked and there are all of these sorts of water issues. So in the short term with the melting of the glaciers which is happening, Pakistan's going to have more water. In the longer term though it's going to have insufficient water and

there's not a lot they can do about it. India strategically controls the headwaters of three of the six Indus Rivers; it's called the Indus Water, there are five rivers in Punjab and the Indus and Pakistan gets the water from three and India controls the headwaters. India could if it wanted to turn that water off and so there are all of these issues that they really need to work together to resolve.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

I'm Elizabeth Lopez, your host for this episode of Up Close, coming to you from the University of Melbourne, Australia. We're talking about the Kashmir dispute, this episode, with our guest Dr Christopher Snedden. Well so far we've talked about India, Pakistan and Kashmir but I'd like to turn now to what Kashmir means for the rest of the world. How much basis is there to fears of a nuclear war?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

As a former intelligence analyst we used to talk about capability and intent. Now there's certainly the capability. Pakistan is now the fourth largest nuclear arsenal in the world. After the US, Russia and China then comes Pakistan. It has more apparently nuclear weapons now than India. India has a greater capability though to develop more weapons because of the way it produces nuclear energy and so on and so forth. The intent of both nations is not to use them. Pakistan wants a no war pact with India. India has pledged that it will adhere to the no first use policy. That said, in 2001 after the Indian Parliament was attacked, India and Pakistan almost did go to war and General Musharraf who was then the leader of Pakistan said if our back's against the wall India you can expect that we will use nuclear weapons. So cooler heads prevailed with a lot of pressure from the United States and other nations around the world telling them this would not be a good thing. At this stage they wouldn't, I don't think, fight a nuclear war over Jammu and Kashmir. That said, the Kashmir Valley itself is a nice little arena, about 160km long by about 50km wide and the fallout may - some of it may be contained within that arena if they were to do it which is a fear that the Kashmiris have. But generally speaking I don't think they would but who knows.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

There's apparently overwhelming support by the people of Jammu and Kashmir for peace talks to continue.

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

We don't know. When you talk about the people of Jammu and Kashmir we assume that they're a single identity but they're not. There are five regions with Jammu and Kashmir. It's very difficult for those five regions geographically to communicate with one another, if only because of the geography. Put the Line of Control down the middle and that makes it even worse. To go from Azad Kashmir to Gilgit-Baltistan is impossible apart from going via Pakistan. To go from the Kashmir Valley to Jammu is very difficult, there's only one road in and out so they don't have a lot of communication with each other. Ladakh at the other part of one of the five regions that India controls is very remote as well; there are two roads in there. Which is one of the reasons why India is very reluctant to give the Kashmir Valley

away because the strategic road into Ladakh in terms of its border issues with China is via Srinagar. So they're not a homogenous identity that has a lot of contact with one another so we don't really know what they want. I think probably most of them would like to see some sort of a resolution to the issue, particularly in the Kashmir Valley where they've had this insurgency but essentially the people on the Pakistan side are stateless and it would be nice to see their status resolved as well.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

Is there a critical mass of politicians in India and Pakistan who are interested in working towards a lasting peace or is there a lot of use of this for domestic political purposes?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

The latter, Liz. It's called the Foreign Hand. It's this wonderful device whereby you can blame all of your issues on the other nation. So when there's an uprising in Balochistan or even I've heard the Pakistanis say the Indians are responsible for what's happening in the federally administered tribal areas; the Pakistanis say that's the foreign hand and it's shorthand for meaning India's meddling. The same in India. Many of the problems in Jammu and Kashmir are from India's point of view due to Pakistan meddling which is a total misrepresentation of the situation but a very handy device to deflect attention from your own domestic problems. That's a major factor in terms of trying to resolve that issue that there's not a lot of honesty and openness about what's actually happening. The Indians need to admit that they've done some terrible things in Jammu and Kashmir, particularly the Kashmir Valley. Equally the Pakistanis need to admit that they've taken advantage of a situation and are supporting militants who go into the Kashmir Valley to fight India.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

Do we have much of a sense of how Muslims in Kashmir feel about the prospect of going to Pakistani rule given that it's a feudocracy run by the military with an economy that is very fragile?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

It's interesting, we talked about Sheikh Abdullah. In 1947 he actually believed that they didn't want to go to Pakistan, apart from those other issues that I mentioned, because he thought that Pakistan would be a nation dominated by feudal and other elements and he's proven to be correct. Not only do feudal elements still dominate Pakistan, feudal tribal elements, you've got this third tribe if you like in the broad sense of that word, the Pakistan military which is very powerful and a force that may not actually want to see a resolution to the Kashmir dispute because that would mean that we could downsize the Pakistan military to something far less than 550,000 men in it at the moment. There's that reluctant I think amongst some that they don't want to go to Pakistan where they would just be another group dominated by the Punjabis. Punjab is 65 per cent in terms of the population of Pakistan and they do dominate that nation. So the Kashmiris who are very clever people think maybe the best thing for us is to not be involved with either nation which is why this concept of Azadi or freedom or independence is probably the most popular

aspiration for the people of the Kashmir Valley.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

Is it a realist one given its strategic importance?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

Well they would say it's realistic because they look at other nations of South Asia who are less populace and less in area, for instance the Maldives, 300,000 people in a very small kilometrage on a number of a islands of course so a different situation. But Bhutan, smaller in area, Sri Lanka smaller in area; Sri Lanka has a larger population, Bhutan has a smaller population than Jammu and Kashmir and they would say yes, it's feasible from that point of view. They would point to East Timor that had a referendum and they were allowed to stay away from Indonesia. Strategically though it would be very difficult because Pakistan - which is an acronym in which the K stands for Kashmir - would want its part of Kashmir and the Indians would meddle and then you've got the Chinese aspect as well. It would be very difficult.

Not unfeasible because it's always been a tourist destination so they could earn a lot of hard currency through tourism. If they could get control of their waters they could earn a lot of money through generating hydroelectricity but very difficult in terms of managing the Indian and Pakistani aspirations or desires for a part in that particular historically wonderful Kashmir Valley that people have talked about for a long period of time.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

So since the '40s, the UN has made three resolutions calling for a plebiscite of the people of Jammu and Kashmir and Pakistan has said yes please we would like that, India has said no but neither of them wants to countenance the prospect of independence. How likely is it that we will ever get some sort of referendum?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

It's highly unlikely. India doesn't want the plebiscite and since their 1971 war the result of which was the creation of Bangladesh it's got this agreement called the Simla Agreement with Pakistan that says all issues will be resolved bilaterally which discounts the UN or any other third party and anybody who wants to try and say to India we will act as a moderator on this particular dispute is going to be told by India no thanks, we're not interested, we've got this arrangement with Pakistan. In terms of the plebiscite the UN who passed these resolutions - and remembering of course that it was India that first suggested the plebiscite, the UN has been impotent and the UN hasn't looked at the Kashmir dispute per se since 1965. In the late 1990s and again in about 2010 there was a movement to take Jammu and Kashmir, the Kashmir dispute off a list that the UN has of unresolved disputes. Pakistan every year, it's my understanding - it's very difficult to find it on the UN site - but every year Pakistan must reaffirm that it wants the Kashmir dispute left on the list of unresolved disputes even though the United Nations Security Council hasn't looked at it since 1965. It's one of the great contradictions that India the great democracy doesn't want a plebiscite and Pakistan, the nation that's been ruled by the military for half of

its existence without any democracy during those periods wants the plebiscite and it's a device that Pakistan uses to try and make India look less than democratic but India's not interested.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

So in 2010, perhaps the closest we've got to some sort of sounding board of what the people of the region feel was some - undertaken by a think tank in London called Chatham House by Dr Robert Bradnock and they got a market research firm in the UK to survey parts of the population, although great swathes of the population weren't interviewed, was this is a useful exercise?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

I don't know about useful but it was certainly interesting because what it did show was that there's a large number of people in Azad Kashmir would actually prefer to become independent. Now he didn't survey all of Azad Kashmir but he got most of it surveyed which in itself is a great achievement but there's a part of Azad Kashmir called Mirpur and a lot of so called Pakistanis in the UK actually come from Mirpur. They talk about independence partly because they're genuinely interested in it but partly as an economic and political device to get more resources out of either the Azad Kashmir Government or the Pakistan Government, because they used to be anyway, one of the largest remitters of foreign currency.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

What would a viable roadmap for peace look like and is a referendum absolutely necessary for peace?

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

Well in this book that I've written called The Untold Story of the People of Azad Kashmir, in the conclusion I do actually suggest one way of looking to resolve this issue and that is to let the people decide. I use that term let the people decide because Jawaharlal Nehru gave a speech to that titled Let the People Decide to the Indian Parliament a long time ago saying that if they want to join Pakistan fine, we'll let them go but they must decide that. I think what needs to happen is that India and Pakistan need to step back a little bit and allow people from these five regions - and they all have elected bodies - to allow those representatives or to elect some new representatives, who can talk and talk and talk and keep talking until they decide what solution or solutions they want to the Kashmir dispute. In other words if Azad Kashmir wants to join Pakistan, okay, let that happen or if the northern areas want independence and the northern area is now called Gilgit-Baltistan, okay.

But they must understand the ramifications of what they're wanting and be responsible for that. Involve India Pakistan in terms of briefing them about the discussions and what's happening but keep talking and it's going to take a long period of time until they come up with a solution, put that to India and Pakistan, then allow the people to say yes we accept those solutions. I think that's really the only thing that people haven't tried. India and Pakistan if they've shown us one thing since 1947 it is that they are unable to resolve the dispute. They've gone close, supposedly, but they're unable to, they haven't yet resolved it. Well, let the people

decide it.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

Dr Christopher Snedden, thanks for being our guest on Up Close.

CHRISTOPHER SNEDDEN

You're welcome Liz, thank you very much for having me.

ELISABETH LOPEZ

That was political strategy analyst, author and academic Dr Christopher Snedden. Relevant links, a full transcript and more info on this episode can be found at our website at upclose.unimelb.edu.au. Up Close is a production of the University of Melbourne, Australia. This episode was recorded on 30 May 2011 and our producers were Eric van Bommel and Kelvin Param. Audio engineering by Gavin Nebauer. Up Close is created by Kelvin Param and Eric van Bommel. I'm Elizabeth Lopez, until next time, goodbye.

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