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● RESOURCE

Water Conflict Management and Cooperation between Afghanistan and Pakistan

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Description / Abstract

Managing water resource systems usually involves conflicts. Water recognizes no borders, defining the global geopolitics of water conflicts, cooperation, negotiations, management, and resource development. Negotiations to develop mechanisms for two or more states to share an international watercourse involve complex networks of the natural, social and political systems. The Kabul River Basin presents unique circumstances for developing joint agreements for its utilization, rendering moot unproductive discussions of the rights of upstream and downstream states based on principles of absolute territorial sovereignty or absolute territorial integrity. This paper analyses the different stages of water conflict transformation between Afghanistan and Pakistan. It first examines historical disputes between the upstream and downstream riparians, revolving around contending rights claims, resulting in zero-sum confrontations with one party's loss as another's gain, possibly ending in confrontation. The paper then formulates a decision support tool, a mechanism for transforming conflict into cooperation, and concludes by introducing practical methods for identifying basin needs and sharing benefits, enabling riparians to negotiate a win-win process.

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