

PAKISTAN-INDIA RELATIONS AND
KASHMIR DISPUTE

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The new Muslim League government seemed very enthusiastic making a sharp diplomatic move to bring about visible change in the 50 years old cool relations between Pakistan and India. This also coincided with the renewed American interest in the south Asian affairs as part of its global scheme. Although the start in the form of Secretaries meeting appeared encouraging and the two delegates last meeting in Delhi have been claimed to be very hopeful, yet the volatile political situation in India as a result of withdrawal of support by Congress-I to Gowada administration, might upset the whole process or at least delay it for some time. News from Delhi, however, is that talks will continue. It thus appears necessary that the nation and its leadership stand aware of all important aspects of the Pakistan-Indian conflict, which would provide criteria for the success or failure of the whole negotiation process, no matter how and when its outcome materializes.

The Importance of Dialogue:

Needless to say that it is always the dialogue and negotiation which settle the issue. To be allergic of facing the adversary on the negotiation table is never a proper strategy. However, negotiations per se' are not as important as the background in which the talks are held, the goals that are intended to achieve and the approaches that are followed by way of solutions. Further decisive factors are: that we stay fully conscious of our objectives and aims, are adequately equipped and ready to present our view and counter the opposite stand, establish and follow proper priority during the discussions, take full cognizance of the national aspirations and attain full command on the adversary's history, psychology, intentions and tactics for timely counter-action. These are some of the essential points we wish to emphasize so that our new leadership can fully safeguard Pakistan's strategic needs as against the Indian and American mollified moves.

Need for Homework:

To initiate a national dialogue and take the Parliament and the nation into confidence is as important, if not more, as going for some diplomatic move. The importance is more manifest in the fact that the present leadership does not have enough experience in dealing with India. The ruling class and those shaping policies in our Foreign Office do not have the knowledge, experience and resolve of the generation which faced the Indian tricks and intricacies during the Independence and soon afterwards. The Indian team still has its old stalwarts. Our team and those in the foreign office to assist the Prime Minister must, therefore, strive hard in their homework and seek advice of all those who are fully aware of the Indo-Pak history and the ups and downs of their relationships. Dialogue with India is not a new phenomenon. During Independence, our leadership had to fight such verbal battles for years both against the British authorities and Hindu congress. After Independence, Pakistan had series of important discussions: Liaquat-Nehru, Ayub-Nehru,

Ayub-Shastri, Bhutto- Singh, Bhutto-Indra, Zia-Rajeev, and Benazeer-Rajev. In his first term as P.M., Nawaz Sharif met V.P.Singh and Chander Shekar. The last of such negotiations were held during January 1994 between Dixit and Shahryar Khan, never since resumed only because India refused to discuss the Kashmir issue and did not feel to honor what was agreed in these talks.

We must be very clear about the background in which the current negotiations are taking place. Most important is the global scene which has emerged after the fall of communism and disintegration of the Russian empire, and which has tempted the U.S. to assert itself and its agenda of the New World Order, as the only world super power. It is a well known fact that India, contrary to so-called politics of non-alignment, was closely linked to and affiliated politically, economically and militarily with Russia. In the new scenario, the Indian diplomacy immediately shifted its attention towards normalizing relations with U.S. and China. The United States also found it useful to build and strengthen US-Indian strategic bonds and to encourage India as a regional power against China. New links are established in the area of trade, economy and investment. Doors have been opened to sell sophisticated military hardware and technology and inspite of the apparent row over nuclear issue, these two antagonists of the past are getting closer and friendlier. American statesmen and politicians - including Henry Kesinger - are actively working to make India a permanent member of the Security Council, which means holding the veto power. The Kashmir issue and tensions in the Pakistan-Indian relations are a hindrance in the way of the intended Indian global role. That is why since many years, the American think-tanks; congressmen and different Committees are taking initiatives and mootng proposals to facilitate the Indian moves. The US seems to be shamelessly ready to sacrifice its past friendship and agreements with Pakistan for the love of "Dear Miss India".

Kashmir: Key to solve all the Issues:

In the Indo-Pak relationship, Kashmir is the master key to all issues and real stumbling block. The whole US pressure is that Pakistan forgets about it and that the two countries work for confidence-building by concentrating on secondary issues. This is no new approach. US have successfully employed this strategy in the Palestine, and want to repeat it in Kashmir. In fact, the approach is not new for Pakistan and India either, as evident from the 1966 Tashkent agreement and later the Simla Agreement in 1972. We know that these "masterpiece" agreements could not even break the ice in the Pakistan-Indian relations; what to speak of any lasting solution.

Both the U.S. and India, however, are trying to impose such a solution once again. Mrs. Robin Rafael has repeated it again and again over the past few years. Most recently (March 12, 1997) the idea was forwarded in the US House of Representative's sub-committee for Asia and the Pacific. In the committee, the approach was also pleaded by Robert Okley - ex-US Ambassador to Pakistan, Erick Bomeland - Director for Asia in the National Democratic Institute, and Howard B. Shefer - Director, Diplomatic Studies Institute of George Town University. Stephen Cohan, the eminent

American scholar is writing on these lines since many years. A recent report (February, 1997) of a Task Force of the Council of Foreign Relations, titled "A New US Policy towards India and Pakistan" is published. Its clear message points to the same direction. Remember the Task Force constituted sixteen top-most American statesmen, ambassadors and scholars. On top of all this, the US ambassador to India, Frank Weizner, is making repeated statements that UN resolutions on Kashmir are "long forgotten stories" and the question of plebiscite is "meaningless". He is preparing the minds for some sell-out and division of the state of Jammu and Kashmir. The irony is that Weizner delivered his sermon (and the series continued) in the Military Staff College, Quetta rather than in India or Kashmir. Such statements in a military college carry special significance.

Simultaneous to this US diplomatic assault, Farooq Abdullah has thrown a feeler that Line of Control (LoC) should be turned into international border, thus legalizing the division of Kashmir. Deceptively, the Indian leadership first indicated its displeasure. The matter got, however, soon clear when three ex-Chiefs of the Indian Army supported the idea to divide Kashmir and further indicated that the target of Simla agreement was the same. They simply overlooked the fact that the resistance movement spread over 50 years and more particularly the popular, political and 'Jihadi' movement of the past decade, was to liberate the occupied Kashmir from the illegitimate Indian hold, for which tens of thousands have offered their blood and honor. The issue is not to settle some boundary. It is to decide the future of the whole State and, God willing, it has to be faced by all. There is no escape.

What is disturbing is that Pakistan seems to be very eager rather than watchful about the parleys. During the election (1997) campaign, it was particularly noted that Mian Nawaz Sharif and his party were not very enthusiastic about the real issues pertaining to Pakistan-India conflict, whereas strengthening of relations between the two states was being over-projected. As soon as the election results were out and well before oath-taking by the Prime Minister and formation of his cabinet, desire for the Indo-Pakistan friendship was openly expressed in the national and international media. Letters were exchanged, knowing very well how self-denying, astute and cunning the Indian leadership has proved historically. The eagerness of our immature leadership, its loose talk about our defence expenditure and worst of all, suggesting Oslo and Dayton-type solutions and open trade resumption with India are simply not understandable.

The Indian Design:

Look at the other side of the border. The Indian Prime Minister clearly declares Kashmir as an "integral part" of India; that the "issue is long settled", and that if "Pakistan was really interested, talks (sans Kashmir) about trade and communications could be useful". The Indian Foreign Minister, who is a seasoned diplomat and soft-spoken statesman, insists that Kashmir is unbreakable part of India and, in one of his latest statement (daily Jang, March 18, 1997) in the Lok Sabha, alleged Pakistan for "trouble-making with the help of some other countries". According to Indian Foreign Minister "Pakistan has occupied 78 thousand square kilometers of Indian Territory

and has transferred 5120 sq. km. area to China". The Indian Foreign Minister refused to cap his country's nuclear program or accept any other ban and has clearly indicated Indian rethinking about the chemical weapon policy. As if all this was not sufficient, the Indian Defence Minister has announced:

- Increase in the defence budget by 21 percent;
- Further beefing up of the military forces;
- Strengthening of the defence trenches on the borders;
- Take further initiatives in the missile race; and
- Preparing "Ajay" - the most advanced T-72 tank at billions of cost.

He also made clear his intention to "liberate and annex with India" the "Azad Kashmir" area held by Pakistan. Hindu chauvinism is encouraged and inspite of the decisions of the highest courts and pledges by the government, hundreds of thousands of Hindus performed their religious rituals in the demolished Babri mosque. To that, the silence of Pakistan and the Ummah at large is simply disgraceful and regrettable.

The Trap "Economic issues are more important":

No doubt, the above-noted background makes the whole urge for talks meaningless. The Pakistani masses and the intelligentsia are disturbed over this and express their deepest concern. The newspaper editorials duly reflect this mood. To illustrate, Nawa-i-Waqt of March 7, 1997 in its editorial -- "Indian Intentions and Our Inexperience" says:

"In fact a group has emerged in our country, which undoubtedly will be patriotic, yet it considers the matters in terms of (material) profit and loss, rather than national honor and envy. That is why the Indian High Commissioner talks of trade, setting aside Kashmir, and at the same time demands that his country be declared "most favored nation". That we forget the oppression and tyranny against Kashmiri people, interference in our internal affairs, war threats and terrorist and destructive activities organized by the RAW and accept as friend this enemy since birth.In the situation, our young minister of trade, better not be carried away by his juvenile enthusiasm and talk what could hurt the feelings and sentiments of the nation and the Kashmiri people. If India denies plebiscite in the occupied Kashmir and rather keeps an eye on Azad Kashmir to "liberate" it, then why on earth are we so optimistic that in one year time, the Kashmir dispute will be solved, boundaries will be opened for trade and that there should be no more visa restrictions. In fact, India is still ruled by highly seasoned politicians, who never make the slightest compromise on their unjust but traditional stand. They always strive relentlessly to avail international favour for this unjust cause or at least weaken the support enjoyed by Pakistan. And we, inspite of our just cause, but because of internal weaknesses and contradictions, have gone so eager for friendship. What is the reason for this haste? If it is American pressure, then people should be taken into confidence and the whole matter be discussed thread-bare in the parliament. Mian Sahib should

include in his cabinet people who are well-versed about the national issues and their sensitivities.Our stand on Kashmir should be inelastic and non-compromising and we should not think of trade with India without a just solution of Kashmir".

The Indian readiness for talks at this stage is because of its internal situation, the international political mood and the Indian assessment of the immaturity of Pakistan's leadership. The feeling is that Pakistan can easily be trapped as the US currently works to persuade for establishing trade and cultural ties minus the Kashmir problem. India further knows that Pakistan faces the worst economic crisis, its debt burden has gone unbearable and it needs resources for defence as well. It is, therefore, opportune moment to pressurize Pakistan to cut its defence budget and open its market for Indian commodities. A trader and industrialist Prime Minister with his team, not well-versed with Indian tactics, over-confident because of the 'two-third' majority and (according to Stephen Cohan) hopeful to be co-recipient with Gowada, of the Nobel Peace Prize, can be an easy prey to such persuasions.

Remember, however, the only target of all these pressures and efforts is to kill the Kashmir problem and, by converting attention to secondary issues like Siachin and trade, render the seven-year long bloody struggle for independence fruitless. That movement has fully exposed India in the eyes of the world community, compelling her to confess that a mass movement cannot be oppressed through coercion and that she now needs Pakistan to take her out of the mess. India seems very hopeful about the Pakistan trade community, which by and large is ready to forget about the long-term national interests and avail what immediate material gains are offered. A particular lobby of the journalists and intelligentsia is used to work on creating a scenario: that normalizing trade with India is the solution to Pakistan's economic crisis; that it will bring down prices, control inflation, help curtail defence expenditure and finally enable the government to celebrate its success.

Kuldip Nayar -- a famous Indian journalist and ex-ambassador -- in his most recent piece of advice, provides enough food for thought. After telling that Nawaz Sharif was ready to establish economic links with India, but that only Kashmir was the hurdle and that whether the Army would permit him to proceed, he says:

"All depends on Nawaz Sharif. He only needs courage and resolve. He has talked of cutting the defence expenditure, which means strengthening the popular force against the Army. Following an approach that disregards the Army, is good for democracy in Pakistan to get deep-rooted."

After this "logical" preamble, Kuldip concludes:

"However, Nawaz Sharif has no alternatives to defence expenditure cut and economic ties with India. He has the authority for this, because people have given him the force (mandate) which he desired. If he opts for the easy way and fails to bring change in the life of the masses, they will turn against him in six to eight

months. Many people believe that if the two countries come closer, many a difficulties will be over. Kashmir has not gone in the background, yet economic issues appear to be getting priority." **(The Nation, March 18, 1997)**

Look, how cleverly an Indian intellectual and diplomat soften the Pakistani people and their leadership! Examine his suggestion - "Kashmir is not forgotten, but economic issues are more important" - from any angle, the net result is total reversal of our principle stand, and Kashmir is gone forever. Priority to trade and economy is a pleasant slogan on the surface. Let us, however, look deeper. Since Pakistan refused to devalue its rupee in 1949 and particularly after the 1965 war, Pakistan-India trade is negligible. Whatsoever trading is currently done under international pressure (WTO conditionalities), the balance is in Indian favour. We export worth 400 million dollars and import that costs us 550 million dollars. The question is what this pattern of trade with India has given Pakistan in terms of economic development, agricultural and industrial production and fiscal soundness? What is Pakistan's comparative position? Is it not so that per capita income in Pakistan is 40% higher than India? (US\$ 430 against 300). Has not Pakistan's GDP grown faster than the Indian over the past decade? Robert Wising, an American scholar concludes in his recent essay - "Asian Affairs , summer 1996":

"Pakistan should feel complacent that over the past three decades, its average GDP growth rate of 7% was the fastest in the region, whereas it has been less than 5% in India, excepting the extraordinary growth of 6.3% last year. The most authentic reviews of the current Indian institutions reveal downward trends and breakages, rather than hope and soundness".

Under the situation, opening the trade doors will only result in offering India a close-by market, when that economy was facing hardships in the international competitive markets and that is what is long desired by the Indian traders and industrialists. India employed this strategy in Bangladesh and ruined her jute industry and making that country dependent on India for import of even simple commodities. This is exactly what Israel is attempting to do with her neighboring Arab states. This Indian strategy will have very destructive impact on Pakistan's efforts for economic self-reliance. Indeed Pakistan's industry and agriculture should be able to compete internationally, which requires efficiency and improved productivity, but that does not mean lifting all protections to let the industry get destroyed and thus help India to capture our market, as it has been doing with other SAARC nations.

Prerequisites for dialogue with India:

If India is really serious about the current talks, then we need to ascertain the following and see that actions are taken according to a clear-cut timetable:

- a) To clearly profess that Kashmir is a disputed territory and not a mere boundary issue. That it relates to the right of 13 million people to freely decide their future according to the UN resolutions.
- b) Stop immediately the Indian army's atrocities. All coercive laws (Safety Act, National Security Act etc.) to be abolished. International media and observers allowed in reasonable number and manner to monitor the situation.
- c) India would immediately recall its armed and security forces from all urban and rural civil areas, confining them to military barracks and pull them back from Jammu and Kashmir under an agreed program.
- d) Political process will be resumed in Jammu and Kashmir by providing freedom of speech and writing and true representatives of the people involved in negotiations.
- e) All those detained for political reasons will be freed and matters no more to be settled on gun-point -- both at official and public levels. This will be possible if, instead of the military rule or the show-piece government, some sensible system is devised through mutual agreement.
- f) Create an atmosphere in the State of Jammu and Kashmir that deciding its future through free plebiscite becomes possible.

These are the six basic premises that can open the ways to solution through consultation and co-operation. The only condition is that India and the world powers are really interested and serious about the settlement. On our part, the Pakistan leadership must look deep into the history and present its case with courage and determination. The wisdom, maturity and sincerity of all concerned are at test.

For Pakistan, the ideological, moral and political aspects of the Kashmir dispute are supreme and cannot be sacrificed for material gains. Yet, there is no denying the fact that economic aspects are also important and should not be simply overlooked. There is however, need to be fully aware that trade and economy sans Kashmir or before Kashmir, is a misleading suggestion. Our leadership should not offer itself to be trapped. Kashmir, in any case, comes first and foremost in the list of our national priorities. Everything else being talked about is secondary in importance.

No matter what India thinks, we believe our nation is alert and will not be misguided. Pakistan will sure welcome to reopen the chapter of good neighborly relations, provided India sincerely agrees to honor its own pledges and the UN resolutions, according to the wishes and aspirations of the Kashmiri people. That depends not on uttering empty words but seriously initiating a clear cut action program.

The Senate on the Issue:

Concerning Pakistan-India relations, certain basic facts should never be forgotten. These facts were summarily embodied in the historic resolution of the Pakistan Senate, adopted unanimously on

18th September, 1989. The present leadership should thoroughly understand and assimilate each and every word of that resolution which says:

"The Senate of Pakistan:

Regards with concern the disproportionate military buildup of India and shares the anxieties of other countries about the effect of this on peace and security in the region and their apprehensions regarding India's hegemonistic designs;

Affirms that peace and tranquility in the region depend on sincere and scrupulous adherence to and observance of the principles and values enshrined in the charter of the United Nations; Further affirms that the people of Pakistan want to live in peace and friendship with honor, with all the countries of the world in general and with their neighbors, including India in particular; Declares that friendship, co-operation and good neighborly relations with India can be strengthened and consolidated by preserving our ideological and cultural values, safeguarding our economic interests in view of differing levels of development and by resolving those disputes and problems which have plagued Pak-India relations for the last four decades and have aggravated over the years primarily because of the absence of a more positive attitude from India;

Resolves that lasting peace and sustainable friendship with India can be built only on the following principles:

- a) Acceptance of all countries of the region, irrespective of their size or military strength, as equal participants in the region, shunning all signs of hegemonic attitude and behavior;
- b) Immediate withdrawal of Indian troops from the Siachin Glacier, occupied by India in violation of all norms of international law, including the Simla Accords in which India committed herself to the control line as at 1972;
- c) Resolution of the problem of Kashmir, through a plebiscite to be held under UN auspices in accordance with the resolutions of the Security Council and demand of the people of the State of Jammu and Kashmir for their right to self-determination;
- d) Respect for the sovereignty, integrity, independence and ideologies of the countries of the region and their right to decide for themselves what type of security arrangements they require for their defence;
- e) Affirmation of the right of these countries to develop all forms of technology to meet their economic, energy and other needs;
- f) Non-interference in the domestic affairs of other countries and stopping all overt and covert activities;

Further resolves that:

- i. The complex problem of Pak-India relations needs to be handled with vision, realism and caution;
- ii. While pursuing contact and dialogue with India, we should seek an early solution of fundamental problems;
- iii. The Government should pursue with even greater vigor a policy, along with negotiations, to mobilize support for the objective and the principle position of Pakistan from the countries of the region and the world by imaginative policies at national and international levels;
- iv. Pakistan should continue to express solidarity with the Muslims of Jammu and Kashmir in their struggle for self-determination;
- v. The Government should inform and discuss in the two Houses in Parliament important developments in relation to foreign policy;

Assures:

the Government of all possible co-operation in maintaining a foreign-policy in keeping with Islamic ideals and aspirations of the people of Islamic Republic of Pakistan; safeguarding the sovereignty, integrity and unity of the country and in keeping with its role in the world affairs."

The importance of this resolution is multi-dimensional:

1. In the context of Indo-Pakistan relations, it is the only resolution unanimously approved by a representative body. Whereas it was tabled by the writer (Jama'at-e-Islami) and Senator Raja Zafar ul Haq (Muslim League), it was supported by Sahibzada Yaqoob Ali Khan and leadership of the Peoples Party and other parties then present in the Senate. The resolution thus reflected national consensus.
2. Pakistan-India friendship was desirable, but not at the expense of vital national interests. The resolution, therefore, pinpointed factors that deteriorated the relations. Foremost among these is the historic behavior of India which is based on the insult of values on which Pakistan is founded and the negation of Pakistan's ideological and cultural identity. We, on our part, never object the Indian secularism (as it is). Indians on the contrary scornfully reject our religious and moral identity, declaring it unnatural. It is the worst example of imperialist mind that does not permit others to live as they feel good for themselves. We also do not deny that India is a big country. This is a geographic and economic reality. Yet it never means that small countries around India must necessarily accept its hegemony and submit to live like vassals. This, in fact, is imperialism and as long as India insists on such hegemonic agenda, there is no possibility of peace in the region.
3. Instead of step-by-step and piecemeal approach, the Senate resolution offered a package deal, which is practical and result-oriented. The piecemeal approach has

been followed again and again and which lead us nowhere. It will be fool to give it yet another test.

4. The resolution accepts the principle that matters once decided should not be reopened. Siachin issue was settled in 1989. All that was needed to date was to honestly implement the decisions. It was agreed that pre-1972 position was to be resumed. Why then re-discussing demilitarization? With respect to Kashmir, India has never honored what is agreed. How long are we going to hold fruitless discussions? Is it a matter of killing time?
5. The resolution covered seven basic principles, all equally important, and provide the minimum condition for the success of a lasting friendship. Their importance is judged in the light of Indian military build-up and its deep desire and plans to become a regional and global power.
6. The resolution clarifies the pivotal position of Kashmir issue: First, by way of its very importance, and second, in relation to assist and rally world support for the resistance movement and 'jihad'. The position has not changed since 1989; Kashmir is as central as it was and nothing can change this position.
7. The resolution also highlighted the principle of non-interference in one another's internal affairs, the rights of the Muslim minority and the permanent nature of the right of self-determination for the people of Jammu and Kashmir-----all these were the essential demands and consequences of the Pakistan movement.
8. Last and very important, the resolution clearly defined the role the nation and its elected representatives were to play in the policy- formulation and decision-making. This was the appropriate mechanism to shape policies and to monitor them. The Resolution provided the proper strategy and acceptable package and must be closely and thoroughly studied and followed in letter and spirit in the current series of talks.

Lessons to be learnt from the Past:

To make the discussion fruitful, there is need to devise a working system which is tied with practical actions and that there should not be deadlock in case of failure at any stage and we should have rather a mechanism of mediation to keep the process alive. This, in fact, is the wisdom we notice in the negotiating politics of Quaid-e-Azam and Liaquat Ali Khan. The most significant aspect of the Quaid's dealing with Hindu leadership and the British rulers was that he would never let them indulge in secondary and peripheral issues and always bring them back to the core. Look at the correspondence between Quaid-e-Azam and Gandhi. After every talk the Quaid compels Gandhi to bring the matters on record and never lets him to escape what he had already agreed. More important is the fact that Quaid-e-Azam, who practically ruled the souls of the Muslim masses, never made any commitment before consulting and obtaining proper approval of his Working Committee, because he knew the importance of consultation and collective decisions.

Similarly, we can learn a lot from Liaquat-Nehru dialogues. Nehru would not let things move an inch after tens of letters. Quaid-e-Millat at last tried to tie him through his letter of Feb 14, 1950. That fully exposed Nehru who then went completely silent. That was the point of stalemate. Nehru was insisting on "No War Pact" before the Kashmir solution. Liaquat Ali Khan replied: OK, we are ready, but let us work out a clear and detailed mechanism rather than issuing a simple statement. We both have then to stay by the agreed approach and clearly confess that such and such are the disputes to be resolved. Then, there should be a timetable within which the issue is solved or else it gets automatically referred to an arbitrator whose decisions would be binding on both parties.

This is the type of wisdom and clarity which is essentially needed even today to deal with the Indians. Otherwise, experience tells that they do agree to talk under certain compulsions but never cease to entrap the opponent in peripheral matters. This is what they have been doing since 1949.

Conclusion:

This note was initiated with an appreciation that economic aspects of the current negotiations were also important. Yet viewing the matter from purely economic angle, we at once see that the whole Pakistan economy is dependent on the water streams emanating from Kashmir. One of the basic Indian targets has always been to control the sources of these rivers, so that it controls the flow. Exactly the same game was played against Bangladesh through possession over Frakha. India wanted to do the same with Pakistan. After the Indus Treaty, India built Volar Barrage for the same purpose. If India has so far failed to do any harm to Pakistan, it was only because the Mujahideen have upset the whole Indian design. All evidence speak that India did not do any favour to Pakistan in the planning of the structure. It was not without reason that the Quaid-e-Azam declared Kashmir as the jugular vein for Pakistan. It is not merely a political vein; it commands our economic blood streams. So, unless Kashmir is liberated, our plans and programmes for economic well being will also be mere illusions.
