

Political Relationship between India and Pakistan

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Abstract: *Of the many problems which India and Pakistan have confronted since 1947, the most destructive has been their unsatisfactory relationship with each other. The partition of the subcontinent in 1947 was carried through in the forlorn hope that it would solve the worst of its minority's problems, but it achieved little more than a redefinition of the context in which communal forces could work. Although from the very beginning the pattern of relations established between India and Pakistan was one of the violence and confrontation, the cause of their apparently unreasonable behaviour towards each other is not to be found in the superficial nature of disputes between them. The roots of this behaviour were established during the course of events which brought about the creation and birth of Pakistan.*

Key Words: *Partition, Relationship, problems, Pakistan, Communal, subcontinent, Minority*

I. Introduction:

India and Pakistan have so much in common – colonial rule, language, culture, art, architecture, music and the iron frame of administrative system. And, so far as India and Pakistan are concerned, only six decades ago, these two countries were under single central administration, one administrative language and a common composite culture. In addition, these two countries are major powers of SAARC. If the two nations could work together they can bring peace and security in the region. What stands in the way of these nations is the ideological concept of Pakistan based on two nation theory, which India has never accepted. Another factor is the Kashmir problem that is relative to the above concept. If the persisting issue of Kashmir is solved, these countries have so many 2 factors in common that they can really remove the impediments and hurdles, which presently inhibit them from coming closer to each other. The conflicts and wars between both South Asian neighbour have demonstrated that nothing significant could be achieved by a way of confrontation and have gradually moved to the way of conciliation. Hence, it becomes imperative to understand the areas of consternation and debate between India and Pakistan in a critical manner. Because it is the clear understanding of the contentious issues and problems between them could help the both countries to nurture a respectful, productive and bi-lateral cooperation. It is in this context, the present study was undertaken to probe and ascertain the areas of consternation and debate between India and Pakistan. II. Ind-Pak Relations: A Brief Sketch of Troubled History: Since independence and partition in 1947, the relationship between these two countries has proven to be the most obdurate, but also the most dangerous political and military confrontation in South Asia. Following the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War, it has been the most precarious and unpredictable region in the international system. After having engaged each other in conflict in 1947, 1965, 1971 and 1999 there was recognition in both governments that they relations had reached the nadir, and unless remedial measures were taken, they would reach the point of no return. But 21st century opened up with a new dimension in Ind-Pak relationship. The ground for a new era of bonhomie between India and Pakistan was prepared in the wake of India's new approach to its relations 3 with its neighbour in the 1990s. This was aimed at harmonizing the subcontinent's interstate relationship in the context of new global milieu created by the demise of the Cold War. "The Gujral Doctrine" of unilateral measures of friendship, trade concession and initiative on long standing disputes was part of this approach.

Political Struggles: The idea behind such a move was to initiate a route of positive and constructive measures without awaiting reciprocal steps from the other countries. Meanwhile, Pakistan had new government under the stewardship of Mr. Nawaz Sheriff who assumed power on the manifests of peace and coordinial relationship with its neighbours in response to the yearning for a harmonious and peaceful relationship with its immediate neighbours.2 India offered to have a composite round of dialogues, which would consist of all bilateral issues including Jammu and Kashmir. It is against this background of new hopes and aspirations that the process of normalization of relationship between India and Pakistan started and a new era from conflict to confidence building was in the offing. It may be recalled here that even the popularly elected government of Benazir Bhutto was enthusiastic to improve the bilateral ties but owing to the shadow of armed forces over defence, foreign

policy especially on the matters concerning Indo-Pak relationship, the process of normalization could not progress in desired direction. Secondly, domestic constraints also influenced this process as she was facing enormous challenges from the fundamentalist groups. So, any dramatic change in Kashmir policy would not have received 4 domestic support although she relentlessly emphasized on the Simla Agreement, but at the same time just like her predecessors who were at the helm of affairs at Pakistan Benazir has lost no chance to rake up the Kashmir Issue³ on international forum. Even during her second tenure, she evinced keenness towards improving the ties. But unfortunately development like the demolition of Babri Masjid in December 1992 and communal riots cast their shadow on Indo-Pak relationship. Additionally, she tried to raise the Kashmir issue at Human Rights Commission in Geneva, which again gave a setback to the process of normalization of relationship.⁴ However, the agenda for bilateral was set up by the Indian then Prime Minister Sri I.K. Gujral and Pakistan Prime Minister Mr. Nawaz Sharif. A new enthusiasm was visible during the Islamabad round of foreign secretaries talks in March 1997. Both sides agreed to set up a joint working group to discover modalities for bilateral talks and final mechanism to address all the issues in an integrated manner. For the first time both sides agreed to an eight point agenda to resume dialogue including Kashmir.* These issues were Jammu and Kashmir, Siachin, Wullur Barrage, Tulbul Navigation Project, Sir Creek, Terrorism and Drug Trafficking. But, this optimism proved short lived as Pakistan insisted on addressing Kashmir as a core issue. As a result, a plethora of accusation against the other's noncommitment began to be inflicted. However, in 1998 New Delhi talks generated some optimism towards improvement of Indo-Pak relationship. Meanwhile the BJP-led government ⁵ in New Delhi underscored the need for cordiality in bilateral relationship with Islamabad. It is against this background the then Prime Minister, Atal Behari Vajpayee decided to undertake a historic bus trip to Lahore. The most significant outcome of this visit was the Lahore Declaration. It was the "acknowledgement of the new geopolitical realities of the post cold-war world".⁵ MOU was signed by the Indian Foreign Secretary, K Raghunath and Pak Foreign Secretary, Shamshad, in which it was agreed that "the two sides shall periodically review the implementation of existing Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) and where necessary set up appropriate consultative mechanisms to monitor and enhance effective implementation of CBMs".⁶ The Lahore Declaration proclaimed that both parties were "convinced of the importance of mutually agreed confidence building measures for improving the security environment."⁷ It emphasized that peace and cooperation would serve the vital interests of the people of India and Pakistan. Unfortunately, the Lahore process received a serious jolt due to Kargil misadventure during the summer of 1999. It is no denying the fact that mistrust and misgivings have afflicted bi-lateral negotiations several times, yet the necessity of dialogue assumed more significance in the postnuclear phase to maintain restraint on rhetoric and avert the risk of nuclear war in the region. Seen in this perspective, Agra Summit, though a failure, marks an important landmark, because it was significant for seeking to move forward with Lahore process after the unwarranted Kargil interception. After 6 Kargil, Pakistan also realized that CBM was the only viable way for resolving bi-lateral issues with India.

Border Issue between India and Pakistan: Two important factors merit attention here, which freed Pakistan to look for solutions of issues in bilateral framework. One was Chinese neutrality during the Kargil conflict and second was American posture. "It was for the first time in the post-second world war history of international relation that China pursued a neutral posture vis-avis Indo-Pak conflict. Similarly, Washington also compelled the Pakistan power elite to order retreat from Kargil and restore the Line of Control (LoC) in Jammu and Kashmir.⁹ In fact, the motive behind this kind of Sino-American approach vis-à-vis the fourth Indo-Pak conflict was to prevent the escalation of nuclear conflict in this region. Hence, their major emphasis was on regional stability. Even the message from the international community was quite clear that status quo in Kashmir cannot be changed by the force. Again, on the question of cross border terrorism, there was a considerable pressure on Pakistan to stop terrorism as a means of foreign policy that prevented fifth India-Pakistan conflict after the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament on 13 December 2001 and the Kaluchak massacre in Jammu on 14th May 2002. In fact after Kaluchak Massacre both countries were on the verge of waging the fifth war "with much more devastating potential than the earlier once".¹⁰ Thus, futility of Pakistan's armed adventure to settle Kashmir issue by force and considerable international pressure for regional stability in South Asia provided another opportunity for India and Pakistan to reinstate 7 sincere efforts for confidence-building and seek solution of issues in a bilateral framework. Driven by its concern for peace and friendship with its neighbours, India took another initiative towards peace building when the Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee made peace offer in Srinagar on April 18, 2003. As a result of this gesture, snapped rail and diplomatic links were restored. A 12 point peace offer was made including opening up the bus route between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad and between Manabao and Kokhrapur. (Sindh) Further, in a giant step forward India and Pakistan announced in January 2004 that they would commence the process of composite dialogue. A joint press statement issued saw the Pakistan President Pervez Musharaff reassure India that he will not permit any territory under Pakistani control to be used to support terrorism in any manner. This accord raised expectation of a rapid improvement in bilateral relationship with both sides stressing that there were no winners and losers.

A win-win situation had been created. Now the two countries seemed to have ended a long period of acrimony and non-contact that had marked their relationship and expressed the hope that positive trends set by the CBMs would be consolidated. General Musharaff said that the need was to not to touch on divergences behind¹¹. Again, in a bid to take further CBMs, both sides agreed to restore old shipping protocol of 1975 with new clauses with a view to start cargo and ferry services between the two countries. It may be mentioned here that under the protocol, Indian and Pakistani ships are allowed to carry cargo only to each other's country and it is considered highly uneconomic. There is great scope for shipping links between both the countries and Karachi port could be used to transport goods to the northern areas of India through Khorpa, which reduces around 400 to 500 kms distance compared to the Mumbai port.¹² After the assumption of power by the Congress led United Progressive Alliance in New Delhi in 2004, it was feared by Islamabad that peace processes would be forestalled. But contrary to this apprehension, India reiterated its commitment for furtherance of the peace process. The new government of Dr. Manmohan Singh held expert level talks on drugtrafficking and Nuclear Confidence Building Measures with Pakistan. Both parties decided to carry out the process of composite dialogue. The then Indian Foreign Minister observed that one cannot always bother about the past but one should look at the brighter side of future and wanted to settle all the bilateral issues with the neighbouring countries.¹³ In June 2004, India and Pakistan expressed their commitment for implementation of Lahore Memorandum of Understanding of 1999. Besides, many CBMs were agreed upon that included immediate restoration of strength of their respective high commission from 75 to 110, and re-opening Mumbai and Karachi consulate.¹⁴ Both sides discussed specific nuclear confidence building including upgrading the communication channels towards reducing nuclear risks in South Asia. They also looked at the possibility of putting in place a hotline dealing with nuclear in adding to existing hotline between the 9 Director General of Military Operations used by them weekly. The External Affairs Ministry maintains "both sides approached the talks in a positive framework, aimed at taking the process forward and making them result oriented. The two delegations identified areas of convergence included in the context of multilateral force. They also exchanged views on their respective security concepts and nuclear doctrines and agreed to elaborate and work towards CBMs".

II. Conclusion:

The positive gesture India proposed that Kashmiris be allowed to visit religious shrines in Pak Occupied Kashmir and build contacts by allowing families from the two Kashmiris to meet on regular basis. The two Kashmiris could cooperate on forestry management and setting up points along the LOC for trade. These proposals were decidedly a positive step towards improving the bilateral relations.¹⁶ As a part of the composite dialogue both the countries decided to hold talks on Baglihar project. This was aimed at accommodating Pakistan's concern on the Baglihar dam, which is under construction in Doda district. This project is slated to be accomplished in 2005 and will generate 450 mw power for the northern grid including Jammu and Kashmir.

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