

**INDO-PAK RAPPROCHEMENT**  
**A Move That Can Guarantee Their Economic**  
**Sovereignty**

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*‘No country in the world can live within the framework of its own principles of foreign policy, whether big or small. The real world of international politics compels states to show pragmatism, and they do so very often because being rigid and inflexible on self-serving principles would cause serious material damage to the interests that the principles are designed to protect’.*

(Rasul Bakhsh Rais)

Pakistan and India are the major concern of each other’s foreign and security policies. Their bilateral interaction is often marred by distrust and antagonism rooted in the historical legacy, the conflicts that developed at the time of the partition of Sub-continent in 1947, the wars in 1947-48, 1965 and 1971; and a wide discrepancy in their ideology, national objectives, territorial disputes, political rivalries and foreign policy goals.

The Indo-Pak diplomacy is therefore marked by the simultaneous pursuance of positive and negative interaction, and the on-again, off-again negotiations.<sup>2</sup> There have been periods of relative cordiality in their interaction, and they successfully negotiated a number of bilateral agreements,<sup>3</sup> which contributed to defusing tension in the region.

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However, the positive impact of these developments was diluted by periodic interruptions and reversals in their interaction. Diplomatic disagreements and bitter exchanges on a number of issues caused a setback to the efforts for the promotion of harmony and cordiality between the two countries<sup>4</sup>.

It is on this account that India and Pakistan have not been able to properly utilize options for a durable peace and meaningful cooperation in the post-cold war era. Given the decades of suspicions and mistrust emanating from partition and post-partition events, India and Pakistan have recently realized to express marginal political will to settle their outstanding disputes peacefully and establish conflict-free ties.<sup>4</sup>

This paper will focus on the fragile relationship, which existed between India and Pakistan, and continues to the hot war from 1948 to 1999, and since 9/11, is marked by a cautious *détente*. What factors have contributed to develop rapprochement with India.

### **Underlying factors:**

The motive forces impelling both India and Pakistan towards rapprochement cannot be explained without the historic note. 'Few states have felt themselves so unremittingly threatened as Pakistan has sensed since its inception. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto, a former Prime Minister of Pakistan, had stated that 'Pakistan was born embattled.' It felt its security threatened because of the environment in which it existed. The factors constituting the environment of mistrust and antagonism between the two

neighboring states, which have given rise to their national securities concerns are discussed below:

### **The Historical Factor:**

The memory of the birth of a nation in particular bloody and brutal circumstances, occasioned by 'hate .... the fear of Hindu exploitation and fear of Hindu absorption, is ingrained in the national folklore and forms an integral part of the national psyche'<sup>5</sup>. Certainly, the occurrence of the partition of India in 1947 is so deeply entrenched in the national consciousness that policy-makers have not been able to ignore it.

The passing of time has not resulted in a generational change in the national psyche for several reasons. The threat of war has been continuously present. Clashes with India continue to occur along the Indo-Pakistan border in Kashmir. Grave issues remain unsettled between the two countries.

The Indian aggressive attempts that are demonstrated in its acquisition of Junagadh, Hyderabad, Kashmir and its role in the disintegration of Pakistan and emergence of Bangladesh in 1971 are viewed in the policy making circle of Pakistani as expansionist. This point of view has broadly elaborated by an editor of the Pakistan journal in the following words,

Since the partition of India, the two major countries of the region-India and Pakistan-have been in a state of perpetual cold war. This cold war evolved from the conflict over Kashmir in 1947, closing of the canal waters flowing from India to Pakistan, India's conquest

of the princely state of Junagadh in 1947, through the hostilities of 1965, to the final round over East Pakistan in 1971. These outbursts between the two countries increased the tempo of the cold war and transformed it into hot war.<sup>6</sup>

### **The Ideological Factor:**

The hate and fear relationship has existed between the two countries from the days of the British Raj in India. Pakistan was created on the basis of the 'Two Nation Theory', which claimed that Hindus and Muslims of subcontinent could not co-exist peacefully in one state. Many Pakistanis believe that India has never accepted the concept of the 'Two Nation Theory', thus undermining the existence of Muslim Pakistan. Preponderantly, Pakistani policy-makers, official statements and academic works have subscribed to the premise.<sup>7</sup>

On the Indian side, the creation of Pakistan represents a tragedy as well as 'the vivisection of the body' of mother India.<sup>8</sup> The Prime Minister of India, once remarked that the idea of a separate Muslim nationhood was absurd and mischievous, and 'hardly worth considering'.<sup>9</sup> The Indians disliked Pakistani leaders' efforts at projection of the ideological character of the Pakistani state. They, therefore, perceived the portrayal of Pakistan as the 'Bastion of Islam' in the subcontinent and in perpetual conflict with Hinduism.<sup>10</sup>

The Muslim perception that Hindus will dominate the Muslims, a minority population, was clearly stated by Mr. Jinnah, the founder of Pakistan:

Hindu India and muslim India must be separated because the two nations are entirely distinct...we differ in our history, culture, language, architecture, music, laws, jurisprudence, calendar and our entire social fabric and code of life.... One India is impossible to realize, which will inevitably mean that the Muslims would be transferred from the domination of the British to the caste Hindu rule, a position that Muslims will never accept.<sup>11</sup>

India has always claimed that it is a secular state. The Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, dismissed the 'Muslim nation' as 'nothing at all except an emotional state of mind'.<sup>12</sup> Pakistan has maintained that there is a discrepancy between the stated official position, and what happens in reality. This is an important reason why Hindu-Muslim communal clashes in India since partition are given prominent coverage in the Pakistani media. It is Pakistan's belief that a latent Hindu chauvinism has always existed, which is retrospectively corroborated by the rise of rightist parties like the Bharatiya Janata Party and the Shiv sena, and symbolized by destruction of the Babri Masjid.<sup>13</sup>

### **Kashmir Factor:**

At the very outset, India and Pakistan have remained locked in a confrontational mode because of the Kashmir dispute which, besides

invoking intense feelings in their peoples, is now inextricably linked to peace and security of the South Asian region.

There is also the question of parity and identity looming large over the two countries. This resulted partly from the historical feud and partly from the partition of Kashmir. If there were not the crisis of Kashmir, the question of parity and status with India would not have created as many hurdles in their relations.<sup>14</sup> So it can be said the Kashmir problem has driven the government of Pakistan to seek status and parity, in terms of military strength and capability, with India. The policy making circle in Pakistan is fully cognizant of the fact that unless it equals India in military strength and capability, it cannot be able to reverse the status quo in Kashmir. 'The misgivings created in the Pakistanis by denial of the promise of plebiscite on Kashmir since 1953, though pledged by Nehru, would remain a factor, the removal of which largely depends on the Indian diplomatic dexterity to build confidence measures in Pakistan. To concede the right to self-determination to the Kashmir means to Indians, the concessions of all 'irredentist' claims on India'. Whereas, Pakistan views Kashmir as a core issue, resolution of which has to be part of a comprehensive approach to other issues. It clearly suggests that Kashmir issue could not be treated in isolation from other problems between India and Pakistan.

Benazir Bhutto's suggestion at the seminar where Vajpayee spoke is probably the best one for the time being. She said: "Kashmir could be separated" from efforts towards normalization. "China and India," she said, "have a border dispute but they do not threaten each other with war." New Delhi and Islamabad should move ahead despite their differences over Kashmir. Benazir herself proposed soft borders.<sup>15</sup>

### **Military Balance as a Factor:**

‘The fear of survival and the question of power parity pushed Pakistani policy-makers towards gaining military parity with India. Pakistani leaders wanted to project their country’s image in the international arena as an equal of India in military terms, and wished to redress the sub-continental power balance<sup>16</sup>. To accomplish this, Pakistan joined forces with the major powers in military alliances. ‘This move of Pakistan was mainly to internationalize the issues of conflict between India and Pakistan by inviting the Super Power in the international system to deal with a hostile India from a position of strength<sup>17</sup>. It is interesting to note that though the US strategy of the military alliances of the cold war era were the part of the containment of communism, yet Pakistan’s participation was largely due to the need of security against India. Actually, Pakistan never perceived a communist threat until the outbreak of the Afghanistan crisis in the late 1970’s<sup>18</sup>.

Pak-U.S. military pact, signed in May 1954, marks a watershed in Soviet relations with India and Pakistan. India’s reaction to the alliance was adverse. What was of greatest concern to Indian leaders, was that the U.S. aid to Pakistan would change the whole regional balance of power and Pakistan would inflated out of all proportions to its size<sup>19</sup>. Pakistani leaders, moreover made it plain, as Nehru alleged, that the reason why they has entered the pact was not their abhorrence to communism but because they needed it as a counter-force to India.<sup>20</sup>

Additionally, Pakistan happens to be the most directly and adversely affected country by the development of nuclear capability by India. The Indian nuclear explosion in May 1974<sup>21</sup> and then in May 1998

exacerbated the politico-strategic imbalance in South Asia and added immensely to Pakistan's predicament, making its security dilemma more complex and acute.

It is no wonder then that for more than half a century Pakistan's foreign policy was driven by only one strategic interest: how to balance India's inherently greater strength. This Pakistan sought to do in two ways. One, it spent a great deal on the military to balance the greater Indian strength. Two, it sought to align itself with the countries it thought would come to its rescue if the Indians translated into military action their inherent dislike of Pakistan and what it stood for. Pakistan's close relations with the US — and later on with China — were part of that strategy. But that stance may have been appropriate then.<sup>22</sup>

Let us examine below the factors, which have generated rapprochement between the two adjacent countries.

**The change has resulted from a variety of factors:**

It will, however, be worthwhile to specify the long-ignored realities, which are likely to have persuaded Pakistan and India to start the peace process.

The realization in New Delhi that the Kashmir dispute has forced more than one billion people of the subcontinent to suffer immeasurably for more than half a century. Infiltration in Kashmir and the killing of innocent people have only managed to de-legitimize a genuine Kashmir movement that had considerably undermined India's moral legitimacy.<sup>23</sup> As long as India remains pinned down in Kashmir, it cannot play its due role in the affairs of the region in particular and in world affairs in



general. The problem of Kashmir will not be resolved by force by India and the Indians now realize that War is surely not an option for either side. They both possess nuclear weapons and delivery systems, including missiles. War will mean mutually assured destruction (MAD) and has got to be avoided under all circumstances<sup>24</sup>.

Saner elements in India are also looking at Pakistan from a different angle.

Indian interests would be best served if Pakistan agrees to facilitate construction of and to ensure security of the proposed gas pipeline from Iran to India or Turkmenistan to India via Balochistan.

Then there are good economic reasons why it is also to India's advantage to work with Pakistan. Pakistan sits across a number of trade routes through which Indian goods must pass to reach Afghanistan and the countries beyond, particularly in Central Asia<sup>25</sup>. Pakistan can also become an energy hub for the supply of natural gas to India, which has a serious shortage of energy. If India does not secure access to diverse and reliable sources of energy, it will seriously constrain its economy and inhibit the rate of growth<sup>26</sup>.

The ruling power in the country and more particularly the army's top brass is coming to grips with the reality that confrontation with India is no more a viable option if economic growth is to be maintained, political ties with the West, particularly the United States, have to be kept up, defence needs of the country are to be met, terrorism to be combated and, above all, the basic problems of the people are to be addressed<sup>27</sup>.

There is also a realization that the rising economic and military power of China and India is fast changing the geo-strategic picture at the regional

and global level. If Pakistan does not position itself to face these emerging realities, there is every possibility of its being marginalized. This would demand of Pakistan to give high priority to developing its human and physical infrastructure, focus on scientific and technological education, expand its industrial and technological base and prepare for a far more competitive world<sup>28</sup>.

Pakistan needs to pull down the pillars on which it built a fragile structure of relationship with its large neighbour. There may have been good reasons why Pakistan's India policy of the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s and beyond may have made some sense. But in the early years of the 21st century, continuing confrontation with India and hostility towards it is unproductive and cannot help Pakistan in the realization of its objectives<sup>29</sup>.

The world has enormously changed after 9/11 and Pakistan is faced with strategic imbalance. With our meager resources, it is becoming increasingly difficult for us to maintain a credible minimum deterrence. Moreover, Pakistan will not remain a "valuable ally" for the United States for all times to come<sup>30</sup>. Pakistan-US relations, as aptly described by Stephen Cohen, are something of a "temporary liaison." On the other hand, India-U.S. relations are based on more durable and long-term strategic interests. Islamabad has no choice but to adapt its policies to the new security environment<sup>31</sup>.

Which of these compulsions and pressures have played a major role in convincing the two countries to change their thinking and adopt a more flexible, pragmatic and trustful approach? The answer to this question will ultimately determine the future of India-Pakistan relations<sup>32</sup>. The

painful realization that continuous confrontation for over fifty years has already taken a heavy toll will lay the foundation of enduring peace and amity.

**Prospects of normalization:**

Relations between Pakistan and India carry vital significance for efforts aimed at achieving regional cooperation in South Asia. It is so, because these two countries enjoy the status of big sates in this area (India, of course, being the biggest) in terms of size, population, resources, and potential. Any discussion of the problems of regional cooperation in South Asia inevitably boils down to the issues, controversies, and divergence of perceptions of these two neighboring countries and their mutual relations<sup>33</sup>.

In South Asia, which has a per capita income that comes close to the lowest in the world, the ruin that an arms race could bring is all too apparent. Acutely conscious of this in theory, both countries have talked of maintaining their nuclear arsenals at the minimum deterrent level<sup>34</sup>. It has often suggested in the Indian security establishment that normalization of relations with Pakistan are necessary, not only for security reasons but also to encourage the growth of regional trade and make possible the diversion of funds from defense to more productive development activities<sup>35</sup>.

Pakistan and India together can work on the nuclear research programme aimed at developing the know-how for peaceful purposes<sup>36</sup>. For countries like India and Pakistan, where there are vast deserts crying for water and rocky terrain waiting to be cut for the benefit of the peoples and where conventional resources of energy are few<sup>37</sup>. The use of atomic

energy is the only answer to take water to the deserts, break the rocky terrain for useful purposes, run the giant machines and light homes. In other words, the atom must be harnessed for peaceful purposes<sup>38</sup>.

Geographical proximity and economic complementarity are the natural compulsions which should bring India and Pakistan closer so far as commercial relations are concerned and put an end to the stiff and illogical barriers which have been artificially created between them<sup>39</sup>. At the very outset of inception, India was a major exporter of coal to Pakistan; it also exported large quantities of metal manufactures, machinery, transport equipment, rubber products, paper, tea, spices, glass and glassware. On the other hand, it imported cotton, rice, eggs and fresh fruits from Pakistan<sup>40</sup>. Pakistan benefits from an agriculturally prosperous area where as, India enjoys predominantly industrial sector of the sub-continent's economy<sup>41</sup>. The size of India's industries is large and there is a diversity of major industries<sup>42</sup>. While Pakistan is deficient in industrial capacity, it has a fairly balanced and flourishing agriculture. In the production of industrial raw materials, it enjoys a preponderant advantage over its neighbour<sup>43</sup>. With a population so as and expanding, India cannot succeed in making herself self-sufficient in food and raw materials. Pakistan can help India in at least partially solving its food problem and also in the requirements of her textile industries<sup>44</sup>. Likewise India can give Pakistan edible oils, machinery, and other sophisticated technology, which we have dire need of.

Moreover, Pakistan and India together could exploit the enormous potential of the Indus River system for generating power. It would be extremely damaging over the long run if the two countries continue to go their own way to develop the rivers of the Indus system for generating

power — as they are doing at this moment — ignoring the fact that working together would bring much greater benefit for their people and for the long-suffering masses of Kashmir <sup>45</sup>.

The independent Central Asian Republics (CARs) are keen to promote trade with both Pakistan and India. Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan have signed a number of bilateral trade and economic cooperation agreements with India <sup>46</sup>. For the implementation of these agreements, Pakistan can not only provide transit trade facilities to India but also fulfill the energy requirements of India through the proposed gas pipeline projects from Iran/CARs via Balochistan to India.

It should not be lost sight of that the world is fast becoming a 'global village', promoting the emergence of regional blocs for survival in ever increasing competitive world. We have the European Union, Asean, etc. etc. South Asia is a cohesive geographical bloc and requires unity of effort. If problems are to be resolved, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) is to be strengthened and a bright future for one-fifth of humanity is to be ensured.

### **Conclusion:**

Both parties will be guided by what they deem to be in their national interest. But is national interest served by a seemingly perpetual dispute that drains valuable financial and human resources bilaterally and regionally obstructs material progress affecting the lives of millions of people? <sup>47</sup> Off course not. The sensible thing would be for both countries to proceed empirically and take on contentious issue at a time.

Both countries are facing the common scourge of grinding poverty, social divisions and religious extremism <sup>48</sup>. Besides, the relentless pace

of globalization and the dangers emanating from the rupture in the world order makes it imperative for India and Pakistan to move towards economic cooperation and seek political interaction for addressing Kashmir and other issues <sup>49</sup>.

The Composite Dialogue seeks to resolve numerous bilateral issues between the countries, including Kashmir. People to people ties have increased, which will undo years of hostility, although this will take time <sup>50</sup>.

I am very optimistic about the potential for peace between India and Pakistan. Both governments have displayed maturity in approaching the peace process.

Given the long history of acrimonious relations, the deep-rooted mutual distrust, and the fact that some of their bilateral disputes are still unresolved, it is unrealistic to expect a speedy normalization of their bilateral relations. Normalization is going to be a slow process with periodic interruptions and reversals <sup>51</sup>. However, the policy of India and Pakistan to continue to talk on the contentious issues at the bilateral and multilateral/regional (SAARC) levels is a positive development. This makes one cautiously optimistic that the efforts of the two countries to keep their problems within manageable limits and defuse periodic tension will, over time, contribute to establishing an environment of cordiality and trust in South Asia.

## End Notes

1. Hasan Askari Rizvi, Pakistan-India Relations in the Eighties, Regional Studies (Pakistan). Vol. XIII (3)
2. The important agreements included the Indus water Treaty (1960; the submission of the Raan of Kutch dispute (1965) to international arbitration and acceptance of the award of the arbitration tribunal (1968); and the Tashkent Declaration (1966).
3. Hasan Askari Rizvi, Pakistan-India Relations in the Eighties, Regional Studies (Pakistan), vol. XIII (3)
4. Monis Ahmar, "War Avoidance between India and Pakistan: A Model of Conflict Resolution and Confidence—Building in The Post Cold war Era" Strategic Studies Islamabad, vol.xvi (1& 2).
5. Niloufer Mahdi, 'Pakistan's Foreign policy 1971-1981:the search for security',(Ferozsons pvt. LTD Lahore,1999.),p.14
6. Nazir A.Mughal,'quarterly journal Pakistan Horizon, vol. xxv, NO.1, 1972.
7. Niloufer Mahdi, ' Pakistan's Foreign policy 1971-1981:the search for security', (Ferozsons pvt LTD Lahore,1999.),p.21
8. Mehrunnisa Ali, "Pakistan's Foreign Policy 1971-1981: the search for security; (Ferozsons pvt. Ltd Lahore, 1999.) P.14
9. Mehrunnisa Ali, ' Readings In Pakistan Foreign Policy', oxford university press, 2001,p.111
10. Nazir A.Mughal, quarterly journal Pakistan Horizon, vol. xxv, NO.1, 1972.
11. Stated in an unpublished interview with W.Muller of the BBC. Recorded on December 13, 1946. Karim Baksh Khalid; Dawn Magazine, August 30, 1991,p.4.
12. Quoted in Joseph Korb, 'Danger in Kashmir', p.31
13. The Babri Masjid was a mosque, constructed during the reign of the Mughal Emperor Babar, in the 16<sup>th</sup> century. Hindus claimed that the mosque was constructed on the Hindu deity, Rama, which had been demolished by the Muslims. In 1992, Hindus led by parties like the Bhartiya Janata Party and the Shiv Sena, agitated the issue, and in December 1992, the mosque was torn down. Hindu-Muslim riots followed

in which approximately 1,000 Muslims were reportedly killed. In Pakistan, Muslims mobs retaliated by demolishing some Hindu temples.

14. Dr. Narottam Gaan, 'Super Power Involvement in Indo-Pak Relations: A Case Study of The United States', *Indian quarterly Journal*, , XLVI(14)1990.
15. Kuldip Nayar, A region without borders, *Dawn*, December 20, 2003.
16. Nazir A.Mughal, 'Inching Together or a Mile Apart: India and Pakistan towards Détente', *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. xxix, No. 3,1976
17. Ibid
18. Annpurna Nutiyal, 'India, Pakistan and The United States in the Post Cold War Era', *quarterly journal, Asian Studies*, vol. XV (1)
19. Nehru stated at a press conference, "This is a matter on which constitutionally or otherwise it is none of our concern what Pakistan and U.S.A are doing. But practically, it is a matter of the greatest concern to us and something which will have far-reaching consequences on the whole structure of things in South8 Asia and especially in India and Pakistan". *The Times of India*, 16 November 1953.
20. One year later Pakistan Prime Minister confirmed it, when he said that 'most of our foreign policy is dependent upon the Kashmir question, and they are with us on foreign policy', and frankly added that her alliance with the U.S.A. was designed to advance Pakistan's interest in relation to India, *Dawn*, 22 October 1956.
21. Zafar Iqbal Cheema, *Pakistan's Case Study for a Nuclear Security Guarantee*, *Pakistan Horizon*, Vol. Xxxix, No.4, 1986.
22. Shahid M. Amin, 'Away from confrontation', *Dawn*, July 4, 2005.
23. Afzaal Mahmood, 'Towards enduring peace', *Dawn*, December 20, 2003
24. By Shahid M. Amin, 'Away from confrontation', *Dawn*, July 4, 2005.
25. Shahid Javed Burki, 'A new India policy', *Dawn*, September 20, 2005.
26. Ibid.
27. Talat Masood, 'Dynamics of the peace process', *Dawn*, May 10, 2005.
28. Ibid
29. Shahid Javed Burki, 'A new India policy', *Dawn*, September, 20,05.
30. Afzaal Mahmood, 'towards enduring peace' , *Dawn*, December 20, 2003
31. Ibid.



32. Ibid.
33. Rashid Ahmad Khan, 'Pakistan, India, and Regional Cooperation in South Asia', Pakistan Horizon, Vol. xxxvii, No.3,1984.
34. Sultan Muhammad Khan, 'Prospects of normalization', 28 June 2004.
35. Ibid.
36. Surindra Chopra, Indo-Pakistan Relations: A Study of New Challenges and Opportunities, Indian Punjab journal of politics, vol. IV (1).
37. Ibid.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid
40. Naema Sultan Begum, 'Indo-Pakistan Trade Relations', Pakistan Horizon, vol. III (3).
41. Ibid.
42. Ibid.
43. Ibid.
44. Ibid.
45. Shahid Javed Burki, A new India policy, September, 20,2005.
46. Rashid Ahmad Khan, Indo-Pakistan Trade: Prospects and constraints, Regional Studies (Pakistan), vol. XIII (i).
47. Sultan Muhammad Khan, Prospects of normalization, 28 June 2004.
48. Talat Masood, Time for reconciliation, June 2, 2003.
49. Ibid.
50. Joe Wilson, India & Pakistan: 'Vision of the Future: Peace on the Horizon', presented at WRAPP Heritage, February 25, 2004,
51. Hasan Askari Rizvi, Pakistan-India Relations in the Eighties, Regional Studies, (Pakistan), vol. XIII (3)