

Changing Dynamics Of Pakistan-India Relationship And Kashmir Predicament

Abstract

Pakistan and India have been living together as independent sovereigns states for the last 68 years, yet far from being engaged into a cooperative relationship. Their relationship is marked with endless animosity. One can argue that both states are observing precarious co-existence, and also disturbed by outbreak of hostilities, like the wars of 1948, 1965, 1971,1999 and escalated tensions at borders of and on. The peace process has been jeopardized by the unfinished agenda of British legacy. The issue of Kashmir has been a real threat for peace in the region of South Asia. It has provoked both states to get embroiled into unending tussle. The two states are busy in piling up weapons of mass destruction. The catastrophic incident of 9/11 has intensified already war woven relationship. The solution of Kashmir can usher a new era of prosperity for both otherwise the durable and everlasting peace in the region of South Asia would be just like crying for a moon. This paper attempts to develop a discursive historical analysis of Pak-India relationship and prospects of Kashmir issue in the changing dynamics of the world.

Key words: Precarious Co-Existence, Kashmir Quandary, Religious Militancy.

Introduction

Quaid-e-Azam Muhammad Ali Jinnah, a son of Mars, moved immaculately to spearhead the ship of liberating Muslims from British and Hindus. Unfortunately the government of India failed to get reconciled with the emergence of Pakistan. Issues like, influx of refugees, financial assets, defense assets, boundary division etc seriously compounded relations between the two. On the contrary Pakistan was keen to harmonize relationship with India but peace process was bedeviled by the rise of Kashmir issue in 1948. Pakistan made valiant efforts to avert threat syndrome created by its rival. Finally UNO meddled in and declared to hold plebiscite with an objective to determine the fate of Kashmir's. However this decision was a hard pill to swallow for the India government. Instead of complying with UNO Resolutions, it plausibly concocted a plan of declaring Kashmir as an indispensable part of Indian federation.

Kashmir dispute has hampered peace process among two states. So far, both countries have fought four wars and numerous border skirmishes but the matter of Kashmir is still unresolved. Today, both states are nuclear powers and without any exaggeration Kashmir dispute may incite a nuclear warfare in the

* Mrs. Sajida Begum, working as Assistant Professor Department of Political Science & I.R, Minhaj University Lahore

** Sheik Nadeem Ahmed is a Principal of kips Academy Wah Cantt Campus.

region. Despite of making efforts for normalization, Kashmir issue is a menace for the security and progression of South Asia.

Historical analysis of Kashmir: an Overview

The British government sold the whole area to Dogra Raja, Gulab Singh, for 7.5 million in 1846. The Raja and his successors ruled with iron hand. Muslims launched struggle against the oppressive rule in 1930s that culminated into liberation movement before the partition of the sub-continent. The 3rd June 1947 plan which declared that Muslims majority areas would fall in Pakistan and Hindus majority areas were to join India but after seeking the Instrument of Accession from Mahraja, India landed its troops in Kashmir thus ignored the wishes of the people of Kashmir who wanted to align themselves with Pakistan.¹ The Indian troops who arrived by air in Srinagar on 27 October 1947 deprived the predominantly Muslim population of Jammu and Kashmir from determining their future. Of the 4,000,000 persons living the mountain state, 75 percent were Muslims, and the populated Vale of Kashmir, in which Srinagar is located was fully 90 percent Muslims². The total area of the state was 84471 square Kilometer. The geographical situation of the state was such that it was bounded on all sides by the dominion of Pakistan. Its only access to outside world was by road through Jehlum Valley road which ran through Pakistan. The only railway line connecting the state with outside world lay through Sialkot. Its postal and telegraphic services operated areas that were certainly belong to the dominion of Pakistan. It was dependent for all its imported supplies like salt, sugar, petrol and other necessities of life on their safe and continuous transit through areas of Pakistan. The tourist transit being the major source of income and revenue was to come from Rawalpindi, its timber drifted down only in the Jehlum River which ran to Pakistan. The silent faces of the British government also added fuel to fire. Instead of implementing the plan it sided with the Indian government. Pakistan army supported Kashmiri's struggle for independence and entered in the first week of May, 1948, to protect Muslim brothers from the wrought of Indian forces³.

With the intervention of UNO ceasefire was enforced. It was decided that the future destiny of Kashmiri's would be done in the light of UNO resolutions. UNO passed two resolutions, namely Resolution of 13th August, 1948 and 5th January, 1949. These resolutions re-affirmed the solution of Kashmir dispute in harmony with the interests of the people but Indian government never adhered to these Resolutions. The impact was that both states developed inveterate hostility against each other. Whenever there had been chances to open a new chapter of bilateral relations, Kashmir quandary impeded such advancement.

When Indus-Basin treaty was concluded in 1960, it was expected that both states would also proceed to bring forth a scheme of resolving Kashmir dispute. Ayub Khan looked optimistic about settling this long standing matter but efforts ended in vain. In 1962, Sino-India border conflict took place and despite of getting assistance from the big powers, India failed to inflict a defeat upon China. This development greatly impacted the geo-political and geo-strategic environment of South Asia. Pakistan raised concerns over U.S. military assistance to India. Pakistan was the ally of US and had paid a heavy price of joining western sponsored pacts by annoying the Arab World and Soviet Union. Soviet Union had

vetoed UNO Security Council Resolution regarding holding referendum in Kashmir. Had that step not been taken by Soviet Union the issue of Kashmir would have been solved in the decade of 1950s. The government and people of Pakistan were disappointed over-seeing the intransigent behavior of U.S. The deliberate betrayal of big power resulted in massive protest against United States. The people of Pakistan demanded to leave U.S. sponsored Pacts namely as SEATO & CENTO.

In order to address the concerns of Pakistan, U.S and Britain engaged a new round of Pak-India talks on Kashmir in 1962. A total of six rounds of talks were held and the big powers tried to exert pressures on both sides to settle this issue. However these dialogues brought no concrete results. New York Times reported 'India failed to manifest any readiness to make any important concession'⁴. Pakistan upheld its previous stance of solving Kashmir issue in accordance with UNO resolutions whereas India used delayed tactics. India feared in case of Kashmir's decision to join Pakistan then there will be Hindu- Muslim riots in India. Besides it would also provide opportunity for secessionist elements to organize against India federation thus posing serious threats to Indian Secularism. After wards six rounds of talks were held but Indian government showed little interest to remove impediments on Kashmir dispute. India was a reluctant party to the conference table. It was simply under the diplomatic pressure of the Western Powers whose military aid was badly needed. India was never at any stage of the talks about a fair and honorable settlement⁵.

In 1965 Pak-India war broke out over Kashmir. When UN had intervened to endure peace through cease fire, Pakistan immediately demanded a firm commitment from India to solve Kashmir dispute. Since no body was victorious, Pakistan saw the Soviet offer of mediation as the only possible option for the settlement of Kashmir. Both conflicting parties were invited by Soviet Union at the place of Tashkent to bear peace. Ayub Khan accompanied by Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto (foreign minister), went to meet Indian prime minister Lal Bahdur Shastri. Ayub Khan signed Tashkent Declaration on January 10, 1966 without any provision of solving the burning issue of Kashmir. The people of Pakistan were extremely disgruntled over signing Tashkent Agreement. Zulfiqar Ali Bhutto openly opposed it and earned great appreciation from the general public. The internal crisis germinated which proved to be a swan song for Ayub Khan. He had to leave under mass agitation of 1969.

The relationship kept on deteriorating in the following years. Both states did not derive a lesson from the past and went into another war in 1971. Surprisingly Kashmir factor had less role to play in it. This war badly wounded Pakistani federation and its Eastern Wing got disintegrated. At the end of war, the leadership of both countries again voiced about normalizing relationship. The outcome of such optimism resulted in the signing of Simla Agreement 1972. Although significant steps such as restoration of diplomatic relations, air links, expansion of bilateral trade by opening rail and road traffic, cultural and scientific exchanges were also taken but no tangible progress was made on Kashmir. In 1977 with change of government in India, new ruling party announced to forge good relationship with all neighboring countries on the basis of Beneficial Bilateralism⁶. The basic objective was to preserve Indian national interests

transcending from Iran to Indo-China. In order to materialize this goal, India foreign minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpai also visited Pakistan. Pakistan conveyed to Indian foreign minister that without the resolution of Kashmir, economic adventure looks oblique in nature.

With the intervention of Soviet Union in Afghanistan 1979, Pak-India relationship underwent a serious estrangement. India out-rightly supported Soviet military invasion and was among a few countries who did not endorse of the idea of UNO demanding withdrawal of Soviet Union. Pak-India relationship suffered from a deadlock when India alleged Pakistan's involvement in Sikh separatist movement in East India Punjab. The conflict over Siachen Glacier, in the northern part of Pakistan also added fuel to fire. In November-December due to massive Indian military exercises and deployment of troops near Pakistani borders, conditions were so dangerous that there was a real danger of war among two states. However with steer optimism from the leadership of both sides, threats of war got diffused with India prime minister attending 4th Summit of SAARC held at Pakistan. Significantly Pakistan and India signed three agreements on non-attack on each other's nuclear installations, avoidance of double taxation and cultural cooperation.

Benazir Bhutto aspired for solving Kashmir issue within the framework of Simla Agreement and followed the path of holding bilateral talks. The policy of détente disappeared with Indian forces ruthless campaign of suppressing Kashmiri up-rising in 1990. The uprising was indigenous development and it had nothing to do with Pakistan. Instead of addressing the demands of the Kashmir's, India used coercive measures to curb it. It resulted in huge genocide and world community including UNO became a silent spectator. Thus Pak-India estrangement continued to widen in the decade of 1990s. The formation of BJP led government in March 1998 produced a drastic change in New Delhi's perceptions. The detonation of nuclear device created an alarming situation for Pakistan. In response to India nuclear testing Pakistan responded back on 28th May 1998. This escalated tensions tormented hopes of permanent peace between the dominant actors of South Asia. Despite of touching the heights of nuclear armament both leaders also remained committed to restore peace talks. The signing of Lahore Declaration on 21 February 1999 was hailed as one of the positive developments which emphasized upon the need of solving all outstanding issue through dialogue. Again Kashmir issue was marginalized and Indian government kept on using oppressive means to contain freedom movement in Kashmir. On the other hand Kashmiri Mujahedeen occupied number of posts in Kargil sector thus cutting strategic Srinagar-Leh road supplies to Indian forces in Siachen and Ladakh. India launched massive land and air strikes to recapture them. Kargil crisis proved to be litmus test for both states as they were at the brink of a new warfare. Had it not been settled down, the war between India and Pakistan was becoming an inevitable reality. It spoiled Islamabad and New Delhi relationship considerably.

Kashmir Dispute after 9/11

The spate of terrorism unleashed after the catastrophic event of 9/11 that also left impinging impacts upon the region of South Asia. The geo-political and geo-strategic landscape of this region changed abruptly. The Indian government

started putting accusing finger at Pakistan for harboring terrorism in the region. The arch rival also stepped ahead in declaring Pakistan a terrorist state. In order to declare Kashmir's struggle of independence as state sponsored terrorism India launched very offensive struggle. The unabated media campaign was meant to tarnish the image of Pakistan in the world. Indian propaganda consolidated this perception that Pakistan was directly or indirectly involved in promoting terrorism. Besides big powers also developed apprehensions over Pakistan's nuclear program and feared that the terrorists might not capture them.⁷ However the government made considerable endeavors to convince the world by ensuring nuclear defense and vowed to eliminate all kinds and manifestations of terrorism. Pakistan had to cope with new offensive strategy of its enemy. Pakistan was left with no other option except yielding to U.S declaration of War on Terror.

After 9/11 the trust deficit among two countries continued to widen. Relations between the India and Pakistan got escalated when terrorists attacked India Parliament on 13th December 2001 terrorist.⁸ Indian government accused Pakistan-based Jash-e-Mohammad and Lashkar-e-Tayyaba of attacking Indian Parliament. Without wasting time, India deployed its forces on the border and Line of control. Indian government vociferously condemned these terrorists' attacks. It made strenuous efforts to attract world community. Notably it was able to gain the sympathies of countries namely UK, China, Russia, Iran and Saudi Arabia etc. They came hard on Pakistan. They pressurized the government to stop terrorist groups using Pakistani soil against India and advised India to cease its military buildup.⁹ U.S. played an important role in diffusing tensions between India and Pakistan. Former secretary of State and Deputy Secretary Collin Powel and Richard Armitage urged president Musharraf to take stern action against those who were crossing Indian border for terrorism in India. Musharraf in response to U.S. efforts stated that Pakistan would not tolerate state within state and banned both LET and JEM. He reiterated that no organization will be allowed to use terrorism as a tool in the name Kashmir. The normalization process was seriously hit by a series of terrorist's attacks. The Kurnool (2003) train incident claimed the lives 20 people lives, Dehli bombing (29 October 2005), which killed 62 people, Varanasi bombings (2006) that also took the lives of 28 people. India officials attributed all these attacks to Lashkar-e-Taiba. Unfortunately Indian government failed to produce any strong evidence for it alleged involvement neither to Pakistan nor to world community. However Mumbai bombings (2006), played havoc with peace process between India and Pakistan. The officials in Pakistan called it as despicable act of terrorism.¹⁰ India as usual blamed LET for Mumbai bombing. Later terrorist attack on Indian Embassy at Kabul (2008) led Indian Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh to conclude that if the issue of terrorism is not resolved then our wish to live in peace and harmony will be negated.¹¹ Pakistan rejected all Indian allegations. Then on November 26, 2008 a group of Terrorists wrecked havoc in India's Capital Mumbai which caused casualties of 126 people including twenty five foreign Nationals. Pakistan's Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi was also present in India to discuss Kashmir, water and trade issues with the Indian government. Indian officials just like in the past blamed LET and ISI for it.

While looking at the retrospective analysis of extremist and militant organization operating in Pakistan, one can argue that most of them were the product of either Soviet War in Afghanistan (1979) or Kashmir dispute. Pakistan in collaboration with U.S.A fought a proxy war against Soviet Union in Afghanistan. The Taliban and Al-Qaeeda was the product of that war. After the withdrawal of Soviet Army, the Taliban were able to constitute a political government namely as Islamic Emirate of Afghanistan. They remained in power from September 1996 to December 2001. On the other hand Lashkar-e-Taiba (LET) was established by Professor Mohammad Hafiz Saeed at Kunar Province of Afghanistan in 1991 with the purpose of defeating remnants of Soviet forces completely.¹² Jaish-e-Mohammad was setup by Maulana Masood Azhar in December 2000.¹³ These organizations promoted Jihadi culture within and outside Pakistan.

Pakistan is not the only the exception where extremist and militant organizations have prevailed. In India RSS (Rashtriya Sawayam Savaksang) and BJB (Bhartia Janata Party) had been involved in promoting Hindu militancy. There had been strong proof of RSS in Shamjota express blast, Makkah Masjid and Dargah Ajmer blast but no steps were taken by the Indian government to probe into such matters. BJP has been the second largest political party of India which ruled over India by dividing Indian people on religious and sectarian lines. Unity between RSS and BJP showed that Hindu terrorism had become a part of Indian politics. It also negated Indian claim of being secularist state. Apart from RSS and BJB a number of organizations Vishua Hindu Parishad, Badrang Dal, Raskriya Jargan Manch, Sri Ram Sena and Hindu Dharam Sena are known for launching ruthless attacks against Muslims, Christians and other communities.¹⁴ The master minds of Samjhota express, colonel. Purohit confessed that he had links to Hindu outfit Abinav Bharat.¹⁵ However the fact remains that Indian based terrorist organizations have received less criticism from Western media.

The former president Musharraf presented proposals for the peaceful settlement on Kashmir in 2003, 2004 and 2006. His political opponents criticized him for being deviating from six decade old stance on Kashmir issue. He categorically stated that his proposals were meant to pull out Kashmiri's from perpetual war syndrome. His proposals included soft borders, demilitarization, State autonomy and joint mechanism in Kashmir. General Pervaiz Musharraf was able to attract foreign media and big powers. He also impressed upon the Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh who in return showed willingness to go for a composite dialogue. However water issues such as Kishanganga, Baglihar dams etc harnessed positive outcomes. India with alacrity flouted Indus-Basin Treaty (1960) by which India had committed not construct to any dam on all those rivers belonging to Pakistan. Hence Indian government also proceeded to construct more water reservoirs on Pakistani rivers. With no exaggeration water issue has hijacked all peace efforts rather it has created more fears of war. Even many political and economic experts have shown great concern over the rise of water war between both. Again the major hub of water resources for both is Kashmir.

Over the years many options have been given to settle Kashmir dispute by Pakistan, UNO and World key actors but India never took into considerations seriously. The perceptual paradox is indeed enigmatic. The egoistic, antagonistic

and hostile approach cannot augur peace in South Asia. In contemporary scenario the role of China can be utilized as a possible arbitrator for both conflicting nations. Knowingly, China has been impacting the geo-political and geo-strategic landscape of this region. It shares different perspective on Kashmir. It desires for the solution of the conflict through peaceful ways. China enjoys cordial relations with Pakistan and its bilateral relations with India have also improved. Both states have realized the significance of maintaining economic relationship. It is expected that by the end of 2015 bilateral trade volume would reach up to \$100 billion. The role of China as mediator can be utilized in resolving long standing Kashmir dispute. At International Level, United Nations and International community should come forward and facilitate this process of arbitration headed by China. Human rights violation can also serve as important indicator by which International community may impress upon Indian government to negotiate a peaceful pact under the aegis of China. At regional level, the role of SAARC may also be used for facilitating this process. The member countries may pressurize Indian government to accept the role of China.

Conclusion

The Kashmir dispute is one of the oldest unresolved international disputes in the contemporary world. It has been the real hindrance in the way of permanent peace and friendship between India and Pakistan. Whenever there were initiated sincere efforts aiming at the achievement of normalization of relations, they received a setback due to Kashmir. It was supposed to be solved in line with UNO Resolutions demanding holding plebiscite in the disputed region but it was denied to them. India government led by Jwarlal Nehru promised to hold plebiscite but that promise is yet to be full filled. The destiny of Kashmiri's is still obfuscated. Both states have fought four major wars on and numerous border skirmishes but Kashmir problem remains unresolved. Over the years accusations and counter accusations have determined the nature of relationship among the two dominant actors of South Asia. Both sides get also engaged into inflammatory statements against each other that could only aggravate the already tenuous relationship between them. The other conflicts like Siachen, Sir Creek, water issues appear to be less threatening in-comparison with it.

Instead of blaming Pakistan behind all acts of terrorism, Indian government should look after the basic needs of minorities living in India. This is the only way to address their grievances. Pakistan suffered from terrorism more than India and gave countless sacrifices in war against terror. Unfortunately the world paid little attention to Pakistan's contributions. The terrorist activities in Karachi and Baluchistan have been unheard by the key actors of the world. U.S. has developed strategic interests in Baluchistan because of its proximity with Strait of Hormuz and gulf of Oman. Baluchistan closeness to Iran, China and Afghanistan also makes it an important region for the big powers. The power politics of U.S. seems to be supporting India against China. The recent visit of U.S. President Barak Obama in India is a strong evidence of it. Washington considers India as competitor to China and does not want to see the growing role of China in the region.

With the possession of nuclear weapons both states have assumed the capability of MAD (Mutually Assured Destruction) and without hyperbolism this dispute may lead to a nuclear warfare among two. It should be averted with an intervention by the international community or by the path of following the policy of bilateralism supported by diplomatic channels or accepting the role of China as a mediator. Otherwise the long standing peace cannot be materialized in South Asia.

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