

The Agra Summit: A Critical Appraisal

Abstract

Agra summit held from July 14-16, 2001 between President of Pakistan Pervez Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee. This India- Pakistan summit remained inconclusive because of hawks present in Indian cabinet. The two arch rivals and nuclear powers of South Asia came to negotiation table due to international pressure and domestic compulsions. Pervez Musharraf Chief executive of Pakistan arranged referendum and became President in order to look taller in India. Furthermore, he got legitimacy in Pakistan because of his frank, direct and vocal nature which was highlighted by free Indian media. The talks lasted for twice the scheduled time and following this the release of a joint nine point "Agra Declaration" was repeatedly put off. The talks, which covered many bilateral issues, concentrated on the Kashmir dispute. Pakistan insisted that Kashmir is the core issue while India wants a more broad based dialogue linking "cross-border terrorism" in the valley with it. Indian and Pakistani news coverage of this summit has been analyzed in this analytical paper.

Key words: Agra Summit, Indo- Pak Summits, Indo-Pak Relations

Agra Summit

Indo-Pak Relations

Pakistan–India relations have been complicated, tense and contentious due to traditional rivalry from the time of their inception. It has been more than fifty years since the barbed wire fence has divided India and Pakistan, yet they have never enjoyed good neighborly relations due to mistrust present on both sides of border.

“Let guiltless souls be freed from guilty woe” (Shakespeare)

Kashmir has continued to be major issue, bone of contention, causes of wars and border skirmishes huge military budgets and of nuclearisation of the sub-continent. Kashmir is the core and central dispute between India and Pakistan essentially unfinished agenda of partition. Unless the Kashmir issue is resolved, tension and the specter of a fourth war will loom large on the horizon. A level of flexibility

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needs to be shown by India and Pakistan to resolve this issue peacefully (Sarwar, 2001).

Indo-Pak Summits

History of Indo-Pak Summits is not very satisfactory, as forty-eight summits held in order to resolve all contradictory issues and disputes. Unfortunately, only Indus water treaty of 1960 was a success. A treaty, which was signed under World Bank mediation, so we can rightly claim that bilateral talks, which took place between India and Pakistan, were fruitless. These talks ended with no results because of rigid attitude of India. The other important summits which took place in past are Tashkent Summit, Simla Summit and Lahore Summit. These summits ended up with very popular agreements like Tashkent Agreement, Simla Agreement and Lahore Declaration.

Tashkent Agreement between President Ayub and Lal Bahadur Shastri in January 1966 was result of mediation by Soviet Prime Minister Alexed Kosygin. In this agreement both countries reaffirmed their commitments to solve their disputes through peaceful means, both parties agreed to go to their position prior to 5 August 1965. So this agreement, after war of 65, which Pakistan won militarily leads to diplomatic defeat as we agreed to give back the areas conquered during the war (Tashkent Agreement, 1966).

Simla Agreement 1972, after the formation of Bangladesh in the wake of military defeat of Pakistan, the Indian Prime Minister Ms.Indra Gandhi and President of Pakistan Mr. Zulfikar Ali Bhutto met in Simla for negotiations and concluded agreement at the end of June 1972. It was decided that peace would be restored between the two countries in the after math of war. They further decided that UN Charter should govern relations between India and Pakistan. Bilateral Negotiations and peaceful means should be utilized to resolve and settle disputes in order to maintain good neighborly relations; respect of each other territorial integrity, sovereignty and non-interference in each other internal affairs. Cease-fire line renamed as Line of Control and India and Pakistani armed forces were sent within their side of international border. Simla Agreement hurts Kashmir freedom movement very effectively as India stered claiming that Kashmir is their integral part and they do not adhere to UN resolutions and wanted Indo-Pak disputes to be solved bilaterally (Simla Agreement, 1972).

There was nothing to give in as for as the resolution of outstanding bilateral issues were concerned. It is primarily India, which had to take the first step to redress the grievances of Pakistan. However, due to rigid Indian attitude towards the Indo-Pak disputes South Asian region has been in state of uncertainty. Frequent wars have given birth to arms race, which resulted in explosion of nuclear devices in 1998. UNO showed concerns over these issues and in New York 23 Sep 98, when Nawaz Sharif and Vajpayee met and decided to restart peace process in the region.

Indian Prime Minister came to Lahore by bus on invitation of his Pakistani counterpart in the inaugural trip of Bus Service between Lahore-Delhi. It was a two-day trip in which bilateral issues were discussed. Only lip service was paid to

Kashmir issue. Both leaders declared that they would implement Simla Agreement in letter and spirit. They reaffirmed their commitment to the goals and objectives of SAARC and also reaffirmed their condemnation of terrorism in all forms and manifestations. Areas discussed during summit were nuclear issue, WTO, Y2K issue. Prisoners of war problems and visa and travel problems. Communication links between respective Director General Military operations and disarmament and non-proliferation issues were also discussed.(Lahore, Declaration, 1999).

Soon after Lahore declaration Kargil war started which prolonged for 74 days. So in Lahore declaration where trade, bus services and other confidence building measures remained high on agenda only lip service was paid to Kashmir issue and no solution of this dispute was discussed which leads to further deterioration of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan. Washington Accord, between Nawaz and Clinton was signed in Blair House after three hours talk to end Kargil war. History of Indo-Pak summits has revealed that lack of flexibility on Kashmir stand by both countries was the main cause of failure in strengthening good neighboring relations.

Operating Geopolitical Environment

Changing Pattern of Geo-Political Environment

Geopolitics expresses the geography of political relations particularly those of international politics. It relates directly to the science, which concerns itself with studying the effects of location upon popular attitudes and especially upon the diplomatic action of states. The central notion of geopolitics involves the concept that relative strength of the state defines its ability to achieve international objectives. Geopolitics is truly a global science. In the world of today, states operate in continuous interaction with another and geopolitical science follows international course of action and their potentialities more through diplomatic channels (Agnew, 1990).

Power politics is the phenomenon, which is relevant in all times. Geopolitical pattern changes from time to time as it is dynamic. After Second World War, the world was dedicated to the situation of bipolarity, with two super powers. United States and Soviet Union, but after disintegration of USSR in 1990, the world politics changed. In post-cold war era unipolar world emerged and in recent years one must recognize multipolar world. A world with many power centers.

Sino-US Relations (EP-3E Crises and its implications on South Asia)

In post-cold war era, as identified by Krauthammer (2001), “the real strategic threat to American hegemony, is containing a rising China, a country whose position on the global at the turn of 21st century is comparable to that of Germany at the turn of 20th century.”

China is emerging as great economic and military power and it is perceived that in next 10 years it will achieve the status of super power. In this geopolitical situation China is rather willing to take dictation nor like American interference in the

region. American central concern is maintaining unipolar world while China believe in multi-polarity (Rehmat, 2001).

The recent EP 3E crises between China and American is clear demonstration of Sino-US ties. Some scholars were of the view that this Sino-US diplomatic row will take the world to new geopolitical order and new cold war may emerge. EP-3E crises has its implications on South Asia which already demonstrates the emerging geopolitical scene in South Asia. President Bush met with Indian Foreign Minister Jaswant Singh which shows that US has a sense of urgency to prop India to counter China. India can be a major beneficiary in this situation as it helps India in recognizing as a major world power. US might have support India for regional balance as it keeps as semblance of normalcy of relations with China.

In this geopolitical scenario, Pakistan position does not appear to be fortunate. Ejaz (2001) emphasized that “Pakistan’s economic interests were closely linked with the US and other western powers while its geo-strategic goals were better served by aligning with China”.

American pressure to continue peace talks to give strength to India to counter China

It appears that US policy of the containment of China, has to a large extent influenced the decision to coerce India and Pakistan to settle their differences. The emerging economic and military power has once again compelled Washington to look for a strategic partner in SOUTH Asia, free of other constraints (Matinuddin,2001).

Chinese Prime Minister’s Visit to Pakistan which played the Role of Catalyst in Sino-Pak Relations

The manifestations of “Look East Policy” of Pakistan places premium on China’s cooperation’s in the development enterprises of Pakistan, which are in consonance with the traditional bonds of friendship between the two countries and Chinese Prime Minister’s visit to Pakistan in which dozens of agreements were signed between Pakistan and China to cooperate in almost every field especially defense and access to Gwadar coast line played very significant role of catalyst in Sino-Pak relations. This has not been appreciated by USA as it does not want China’s role in South Asia beyond a certain level. USA’s strategic compulsion to contain China comes in sharp conflict with Pakistan’s need to maintain cordial ties with its time tested friendly relations (Beg,2001).

Sino-Indian Relations

Sino-Pak relations has direct effect on India. The Sino-Indian ties took a plunge in early 1998 when the newly elected Vajpayee government unexpectedly raised the China issue. In April 1998 Indian Defense Minister George Ferandas said, “China posed a greater threat to Indian security than Pakistan.” (The Nation, 1998). “ As the government and media in Indian shifted the forces of security threat from Pakistan to China, all guns were turned on Sino-Pakistan military collaboration. The Chinese were accused of transferring missile technology to Pakistan and

labeled as ‘Mother of Ghauri’ by Indian defense minister”.(Hindustan Times, 1998).

Editorial in Indian Express (1996) highlighted that “ Jaswant’s visit to China in 1999 broke the stalemate in Sino-Indian relation. In the aftermath of Kargil conflict the Indian media saw some hopeful signs in China’s India policy. The change of heart in Beijing, was reflected in its sudden volte-face on Pakistan and its insistence that the Kargil conflict be settled diplomatically”. The Economic Times (2001) analyzed that” when Chinese Foreign Minister Tang Jiaxuan’s visited India in July 2000, Indian media reported that ‘Chinas neutrality’ in the Kargil war and dilution of its pro-Pakistan stance on Kashmir”.

Times of India (2000) quoted that “Former President Naryanan was told in Beijing, May 2000 that improvement of ties with India would not be at the cost of sacrificing China’s all weather friendship with Pakistan”. The Sino-Pakistan ties are on a firm footing since they correspond to mutuality of strategic interest. This ties seems difficult to obtain regional balance which India and US want.

Kargil Episode and New Found Confidence of Mr. Vajpayee

Kargil turned out a blessing in disguise for India, it helped forge unity within the country and was instrumental in bringing BJP back into government after a fresh election. More than that it helped India’s stature as an aggrieved party, which had exercised commendable restraint. Pakistan stood humiliated and was roundly taken to task for intruding into “Indian Territory” while Vajpayee could say he was a victim of betrayal after the Lahore Yatra. A shrewd Jaswant Singh made the most of the Pakistan “misadventure” and was able in his dozen or so meeting with the US Deputy Secretary of State to sow the seed of a strategic shift in US-Indian Relations. One of the elements of this new common understanding was a deep concern about international terrorism with Afghanistan and Pakistan as the major culprits. Having thus influenced the American mind, Delhi could sanctimoniously speak from high moral ground and refuse to talk to Pakistan until it stopped “cross-border terrorism”. Playing the terrorism and along with the takeover by the military in Pakistan, Delhi could sanctimoniously speak from high moral ground and refuse to talk to Pakistan until it stopped “cross-border terrorism”. Playing the terrorism and along with the take-over by the military in Pakistan, Delhi worked hand to isolate Pakistan within the region (not permitting SAARC meeting) and abroad (common wealth and NAM) (Inayattullah,2001).

The United States, with whom India is keen to establish a strategic partnership is keen to see India resuming the dialogue with Pakistan so that the attention of Indian leadership can be totally diverted towards the perceived threat from across the Himalayas (Matinuddin,2001).

Internal Politics of India and Pakistan; weak governments want to exploit rivalry between each other to gain popular support

The Military government of Pakistan and BJP’s coalition government lack popularity and want to gain some kind of support from the masses to increase their tenure.

Factor of exhaustion relevant in India and Pakistan

Masood (2001) analysed that “India’s economy has been performing well, but there are teeming millions still living below the poverty line. Besides, growing economic sector pose fresh challenges for New Delhi. The Indian leadership cannot forever remain oblivious to the simple truth that frittering away its substantial national resources in containing Pakistan and managing the conflict is no substitute for addressing the real problems and aspirations of the Kashmiri people in which Pakistan’s involvement is central. India’s economic and strategic potential cannot be fully realized until the millstone of Kashmir round its neck is removed”.

After half a century’s long stalemate on Kashmir, the top political head of both India and Pakistan seem to have realized that the conflict existing between the two countries has to be resolved. Indian leadership for long believed that the issues would subside after a while. That this is turned out to be wrong because neither the three was nor the ceasefire on the control line could ease the situation. This has happened because a large majority of the Kashmiri people 12.5 million have stood for the “right of self-determination” for more than 13 years. The number of people who laid down their lives in this struggle stood at 80,000 Kashmiris and a few thousand belongings to the Indian infrastructure. The calculations could go into billions of rupees. There is at present, 7 lack Indian army personal engaged in Kashmir (Mallick, 2001).

There is an element of exhaustion present on both side of the border. Population of sub-continent seems to be fed up of this uncertainty.

Public Opinion

Broadly speaking, the public opinion in Pakistan as described by commentators can be divided into three camps that include hopefuls, moderates and hardliners. Hopefuls consider move to slow down the arms race; an opportunity to reduce the nuclear threat; and a chance to resolve Kashmir issue. Hardliners are more pessimistic saying that talks will undermine the Kashmir issue; that they are being held only due to pressure from the US, and their net outcome will be to further India’s attempts at securing a seat in UN Security Council. Some are even more skeptical; for them the talks are taking place because both Musharraf and Vajpayee are leading governments in crises –ridden countries; that the talks are an attempt to side track the real economic and political issues that prevail in both countries (Raza & Ahmed, 2001).

Role of Media (Electronic and Print)

Media has played a very significant role increasing the tension between the two neighboring countries as active propaganda machinery is relevant on both sides which excite the masses and make them so aggressive that they are even not prepared or want to play cricket with each other. On the other hand, they are some doves present on both sides which stresses that there must be peace in this poverty ridden part of the world.

Indian columnists commenting on Musharraf –Vajpayee meeting had read what one of their colleagues said: The buzz is that consistent pressure from the US, the European Union and China brought the two recalcitrant neighbors to the negotiating table (Naqvi, 2001).

Factors Effecting the Summit

Indian Compulsions

Indian Prime Minister A.B.Vajpayee's invitation to Chief Executive General Musharraf was also motivated by his domestic political problems where he needs to take out some of the heat off his administration.

Time magazine (2001) wrote that "Vajpayee needs a success of some kind like the nuclear tests and bus trip to Lahore. He has once again sought to distract his critics with grand gestures. Vajpayee's BJP was tainted by the Tehelka scandal in the spring and was slapped in the face by voters in this month's state elections. His own status as the party's principal vote catcher is in questioned. The economy continues to drift and promises to pace down and clean up government remain unfulfilled. His Kashmir policy has failed miserably, despite the winter 'cease fire', the government has been unable to negotiate any kind of deal with separatist groups in the disputed territory".

Zehra (2001) highlighted that "many factors have promoted Vajpayee to opt for a dialogue with Musharraf. These include Delhi's inability to politically 'contain' or military crush the Kashmir freedom struggle. Islamabad's continued support to the Kashmiri struggle, the negative falls out of the unresolved Kashmir dispute on Delhi's global agenda, which includes acquiring a seat in UN Security Council. Striking major economic partnerships, becoming the dominant economic and military player in Indian Ocean and United States strategic partner in the South and South West Asian region".

Pakistan's Compulsions

General Musharraf has also a few conspicuous domestic compulsions that are likely to inhibit him to be too flexible during the summit. His first problem is about the legitimacy of his government and newly acquired status of President to look taller in new Delhi. His second compulsions about of national consensus on Kashmir issue to strengthen his position during the summit as two major political parties PPP and PML (N) have not accepted Musharraf invitation for discussing Agra Summit. Third compulsion is about reviving economy. Pakistan needs massive support and capital from IMF and WB, which have through unless Washington gives a nudge. General Musharraf has a willing role player to follow. Washington South Asian Agenda to a large extent because of its domestic compulsions (Qazi,2001).

Kashmir dispute (Jihadi groups and APHC)

The other compulsions of Indian and Pakistan are Kashmir issue and APHC Kashmir is the core issue as far as Pakistan is concerned. India was probably

agreeable to discuss Kashmir issue but wanted the “cross-border terrorism” to be brought to ends first in order to create a congenial atmosphere for the dialogue. What India call “cross border terrorism” is according to Pakistan local insurgency, which has to moral support of the Pakistanis, in general, and active support of some Jehadi groups. The moral support of the Jehadi activity is of no avail if the Kashmiris themselves are not prepared to fight their battle. No one can fight their battle on their behalf. It is actually Kashmiris who are up in arms (Mirza, 2001).

Independence and security of lives and property is the cherished dream of those living east of LOC in the India held Kashmir. There are the people who have been a constant victim of gross human rights violations by the Indian Army and other law enforcing agencies. They have endured large scale army crackdown’s, arrests without warrants, custodial killings and maiming, gang rapes, burning up of entire villages and neighborhoods over the last decade. Kashmiris living in this past, therefore, have more at stake and consequently were more concerned about the outcome of the Pakistan-India parleys than their brethren elsewhere. The same case was with the Azad Kashmiris living near LOC and who are victim of constant shelling until cease-fire announced by India along LOC (Hussain, 2001).

Musharraf had, as usual, spoken of the need for any settlement on Kashmir to meet the aspirating of the Kashmiri peoples. Advani, had butted in, asking which Kashmiris he meant, gratuitously adding that All Parties Hurriat Conference (APHC) was not the sole repetitive of Kashmiris it was one of them, and the question of who was to represent the Kashmiris would only arise when the stage of negotiating solutions arose.(Niazi, 2001).

Pandit Nehru had declared that Kashmir dispute was like Pandora’s Box. President Ayub declared that Kashmir question was “Time Bomb” which would explode at any time. Vohra (1998) wrote that “India insists that the accession of Jammu and Kashmir is irrefutable and it cannot accept its accession on the basis of religion. Secondly, a course of self-determination would open the Pandora’s box: similar demands will be made by others on various grounds, which would impose unbearable strains on the unity of the country. Thirdly, accessions of Kashmir on the basis on religion would make things difficult for India’s large Muslim population”.

On June 3, 2000, US Secretary of State Madeline Albright came out with the most comprehensive and accurate statement ever made by a US official regarding what underlies the Pakistan-India relations. Talking to press reporters said about Kashmir problem.” It is a problem that came about the minute that the partition proposals came about and the princely states chose up which side, which country they were going to go with. The problem in Kashmir of a primarily Muslim population with a Hindu –Maharaja that headed it, made it very difficult for them to decide they have over the years’ number of way tried. The item has been on the Security Council agenda.

Zehra (2000) analysed that “In Geneva the five permanent UN Security Council members, while condemning the tests and urging India and Pakistan to sign the

CTBT also maintained that the P-5 will actively help India and Pakistan to resolve the outstanding issue of Kashmir problem”.

On June 10, Assistant Secretary of State Karl Inderfurth told press reporters that irrespective of Indian Agitation over the P-5s statement that the Kashmir issue needs to be addressed, “Kashmir issue is a fact of life in the region and cannot be wished away. We are absolutely convinced that it is time now for India and Pakistan to meet, to resume the dialogue and address the fundamental issue that had divided the two countries for 50 years” (Zehra ,2000).

APHC and Jihadi Groups (Indian Versions)

Indian Ministry of Defense reported that “despite India’s insistence on the creation of a conducive atmosphere, Islamabad only continued with its hostile approaches and policies towards New Delhi. On Pakistan, the report said, there were “clear indications” that it sought to sabotage the peace initiative, unilaterally announced by the Indian government in November in the form of a ceasefire in Jammu and Kashmir. The escalation in levels of Pakistan’s sponsorship of cross border terrorism clearly indicated by the qualitative improvement in weapons, communication equipment and training that was made available to all Pakistan – based terrorist group, the report says Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Muhammad and Harkut-ul-Mujahideen are some Pakistani –based militant groups. During the six-month old unilateral ceasefire announced by the Prime Minister on November 9, the militant groups escalated violence through attacks on fortified targets, especially the Fidayean (Suicide Group) of Lashkar-e-Taiba”. The report described “Pakistan’s announcement of ‘maximum restraint ‘along line of control LOC as clearly self-serving in nature as it did not address concern related to Islamabad’s contained sponsorship of cross-border terrorism”.

Simultaneously Pakistan also contained with its shrill campaign of anti-India propaganda. The report said Pakistan also sabotaged the July 2000 unilateral ceasefire and leadership of Hizbul Mujahideen with stepped up violence in Jammu and Kashmir and intense political pressure on the group’s Pakistan based leadership” (Tribune, New Delhi,2001).

Agra Summit: Musharraf and Vajpayee

With such geopolitical environment and imperatives Indian Prime Minister invited Chief Executive of Pakistan General Pervez Musharraf for bilateral talks on May 23, 2001 by extending a letter. Gen. Musharraf accepted it and leave for New Delhi on July 14, 2001 for two-day Summit in Agra.

Areas discussed during Summit Talks

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and President Musharraf have had one to one talks for a total of over eight hours during their two-day summit. The two leaders were initially expected to meet without delegates on Sunday only for 15 minutes, but their private dialogue lasted for over one hour 45 minutes. After that they talked over a working lunch with delegates and later met without them again in the evening. The negotiations were originally to end after the third round

of talks between the two leaders on Monday. But they were closeted again for a fourth round that led to Musharraf canceling his pilgrimage to Ajmeer.

The talks lasted for twice the scheduled time and following this the release of a joint nine point “Agra Declaration” was repeatedly put off. The talks, which covered many bilateral issues, concentrated on the Kashmir dispute. Pakistan insist that Kashmir is the core issue while India wants a more broadly based dialogue linking “cross-border terrorism” in the valley with it (Dawn,2001)

Leaders’ Perception

Gen Pervez Musharraf had hinted that he would be “flexible” on the question of Kashmir if New Delhi showed the same willingness, forward movement is possible provided the two sides come to the negotiating table with open minds and agree to show some flexibility in their stated position on Kashmir.

“I must say that in the interest of this region Prime Minister Vajpayee had demonstrated real statesmanship and I am really pleased and appreciate what he has done”, Musharraf said in an interview with the Dubai daily Khaleej Times (2001).

In his speech at the banquet hosted in his honor by Indian President K.R.Narayanan Musharraf said that he believed that there can be no military solution of Kashmir but must be resolved peacefully. This indeed will open a new chapter of fruitful relations between two countries and also put an end to the suffering of people of Kashmir (Musharraf Speech in Agra, 2001).

Musharraf while breakfast meeting with Indian editors said that Kashmir dispute remained central to ending enmity with India. If India expect that, I should ignore Kashmir, I better buy back Neharwali Haveli and stay there. The biggest confidence building measure is Kashmir (The News, 2001).

He has also declared that he will change the history of Indo-Pak relations as with 1/5th of the world population our masses living in poverty and deprivation. “Our region needs cooperation, mutual and peace. We must not allow the past to dictate us. We must overcome the burden of history other nations have done it. We must also do it.” (Musharraf Speech in Agra, 2001).

Musharraf while addressing the press conference in Islamabad on July 20,2001, admitted that he returned from India empty handed but not disappointed as Agra Summit had generated tremendous goodwill and understanding. He said, “The wide gulf between India and Pakistan has in fact narrowed as a result of Agra Summit, three summit we were close to sign declaration.” He further explained that “it was not a football match and there no question scoring goals or points. If talks had failed the loser were people of India, Pakistan and Kashmir; and if we had reached the agreement again the people would have gained. He emphasized that “Justice must prevail” and no one can stop peace process on Kashmir (The News, 2001).

Vajpayee's perception before during and after summit can be judged by just analyzing his invitation letter and his statements during and after the summit. Vajpayee wrote in his letter of invitation to Musharraf that "India has through dialogue constantly endeavored to build a relation of durable peace, stability and cooperative friendship with Pakistan. Our common enemy is poverty. For the welfare of people there is no other resource but the pursuit of path of reconciliation of engaging in a productive dialogue by building trust and confidence"(Vajpayee letter to Musharraf).

He further wrote that, "Secure and prosperous Pakistan is in India's interest and that remains our conviction. We have to pick up the treads again including recurring the composite dialogue so that we can put in place a composite structure of cooperation an address all outstanding issues including Jammu and Kashmir" (The News, 2001).

Vajpayee told a public gathering in the west state of Gujrat. "I am hopeful we will find a solution to the Kashmir dispute." Vajpayee said in an interview with press Trust of India (PTI) that", I hope Pakistan President will bring to the summit meeting a desire to bury the conflicts of the past and to build a new relationship of trust." He said, "No issue that contributes to the establishment of peace, friendship and cooperation between India and Pakistan can be considered peripheral" (The News, 2001).

After Agra Summit Vajpayee termed his talks with Musharraf successful. He said there was agreement on many issues in the summit. A.B. Vajpayee said that thing could not move during the two the two-day summit because President Musharraf kept stuck to the demand that "centrality of the Kashmir problem should be accepted, if India and Pakistan really want to have peace among them. While we see this issue related to cross-border terrorism" (The News, 2001).

He further said, "As head of my cabinet I take full responsibility for not reaching an agreement with Pakistan at the end the Agra Summit. He also denied that there was an "agreed draft" of the anticipated accord, he tried to refute the perception that his cabinet was house divided on that. It was due to the resistance of established "hawks" like L.K.Advani. (The News, 2001).

International Response

President Bush has made offer mediation if both India and Pakistan agree and request for it. Referring to the "inherent dangers of the continuing disputes between India and Pakistan over the region of Kashmir." In this letter to senator he also verifies contrary to Indian claims, US has played an effective role in bringing both the countries to negotiating table. President Bush has emphasized that solution of Kashmir must be found in accordance to wishes of the Kashmir people. In response to a letter of concern on South Asian situation by US Senator Thomas Carper, he said, "I believe the leaders of India and Pakistan must talk directly to resolve the issue dividing the nations." (The News, 2001).

US Secretary of State Colin Powell has offered to lend American help to the improvement of relations between India and Pakistan and the difficult outstanding issues, whether it is Kashmir or nuclear issues. Senior US official Christinna Rocca said Pakistan, India should resolve Kashmir. As she added that Bush Administration has not changed Clinton's policy and believed that Kashmir was disputed territory and that the imbroglio has to be resolved (The News, 2001).

Putin and Ziamen also discussed Agra Summit and hoped for successful negotiation.

State department spokesman Richard Baucher had told his daily press briefing that while the US would like to make clear it was not involved in setting up the Summit, "we support strongly the sustained engagement at a senior level between India and Pakistan."

UN Secretary General Kofi Annan said "the leaders of India and Pakistan should continue talking even through their round of meeting was disappointed to both sides"(Dawn. 2001).

Stephen P.Cohen believed that the Bush administration does not appear to be inclined even to play the role of facilitator. All it was interested at present to seek strategic relationship with India. According to Chen, "Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee has emerged damaged while Gen. Musharraf has succeeded in slowing down the process of his demonization. Vajpayee initiated the process of dialogue with the military leader to ward off international pressure, pre-empt any US initiative and keep his own control over the process.

The New York Times (2001), in an analysis by two of its correspondents in South Asia, Elucidated that "nothing solid came out of the talk as both countries are stuck on semantics. The meeting ended without agreement and without even the polite formality of a public handshake, the two nuclear rivals have been alternately upbeat and down cast about each other and their future relations. They act the proof of wavering daisy petal pickers; we hate them; we hate them not..Pakistan wants India to admit that the Himalayan region of Kashmir as core issue. After all, it has been the cause of two of their three wars. Each holds portion of it. Their troops face each other along a cease-fire line. But the Indians refuse to acknowledge that this Himalayan territory is even in dispute".

Response of Media

Agra Summit can be rightly described as media event. Role of electronic and print media before and after as well as during the summit was very powerful and according to some scholars must controversial.

When the Indian Prime Minister invited Gen. Pervez Musharraf and the military ruler of Pakistan accepted the invitation, the media in Pakistan created an atmosphere of hope and optimism. It suggested directly and indirectly that international power politics players were arranging the talks and they wanted disputes between India and Pakistan to be resolved. Due to this hype, a large number of foreign relations and media experts decided to cover the summit.

Hundreds of expert's reporters and columnists decided to acquire an Indian Visa to cover the summit.

Diplomatic reporting is a specialized field and reporters who are assigned such duties are properly trained for this job. The so-called media experts of both the sides, turned the summit into a 'media war' by hammering in their often-repeated age old stances during the marathon broadcast. Perhaps it was the only meeting between two adversaries that had been held in an atmosphere of a mela. The seriousness and sobriety needed for such sensitive negotiations was missing. Though there was no set agenda for the talks and no one was aware what issue would be discussed and what would be the approach of both the leaders, the electronic media on both sides decided to inform their respective audience about the summit meetings as it progressed.

Since they had no information available, they were obliged to fill the gap with expert, comments and analysis that were either based on speculation or on clichés like generalities (Hasan, 2001).

Media has been accused of portraying a false image of Agra, right up to the movement when the outcome became clear. Rehman (2001) identified that "It was for the first time in history that a summit between India and Pakistan was being held under the full gaze of independent electronic media, with the print media showing greater freedom in discussing the issue, than had been the case in past".

While the officials struggled with joint texts as expressions of minimal accommodation the TV especially Star TV advanced the bilateral debate at a much higher intellectual level. Dordarshan was lack luster, and mercifully trivialized by the independent channels. The PTV mercifully displayed its trained canary of discussants depositing their guano of biased opinion on the popular mind. The big feature of Star TV breakthrough was the time it gave it to Pakistan discussants without the host interviewing in the favor of Indian view. General Musharraf, may, not have won in Agra but Pakistan won on the TV Channels. If it hadn't been for the 'victory' scored by Pakistan discussants on Star TV, Gen. Musharraf performance with the Indian journalists would have been the conclusive deflator of the visit (Ahmed, 2001).

It may not be an exaggeration to slot the Star News broadcast of Gen. Musharraf's breakfast with leading Indian editors as the importance of event of the Agra Summit. It instantly impacted open the diplomatic, political and media climate in and much beyond Agra. Some commentators and officials, including the Indian Prime Minister, A.B.Vajpayee, believe the broadcast may have been responsible for the absence of the Agra declaration.

It was planned as a breakfast meeting with the print and electronic media editors not to be telecast live. Hence when meeting began only a PTV cameraman was recording the event to be shown subsequently on PTV. However, Prannoy Roy of Star News requested PTV for recorded video and telecast it after half an hour many believed it was being telecast live. In India it had the deepest impact

Zehra (2001) elucidated that “As president cast as spell on the Indian editors was all too apparent from the screening of the big event. He came across as frank, even if at times brutally so and certainly much focused”.

Hussain (2001) analysed Indian Media in his article written in Dawn that , “Indian media has mixed view about Agra meeting outcome, known for its readings to lay the blame for most problems in the region squarely at the doorstep of Pakistan, the Indian media was surprisingly restrained in this indulgence while covering the anticlimax of Agra. Most newspaper called it a failure, but reports varied widely on the reasons behind the collapse issue and cross border terrorism as the cause of failure. The Indian Express too sounded disappointed. “They broke the ice then froze” read a headline in the paper. The Hindustan times quotes, ‘Agra is history, not the end’. Dilip Padgaonkar editor of Times of India, said, “There were too many expectations, two, years ago, Indian and Pakistan were not talking. Now at least a bilateral forward military man eager to improve relations but baffled by India’s unwillingness to talk about Kashmir problem he played his role to perfection”.

Pakistan print media seems to be optimistic of future relations and blamed India hawks and hard liners of BJP for sabotaging the summit.

Projected Readings and Implications

After inconclusive Agra Summit the merging geo-strategic environment has many regional and global implications.

Mazari (2001) elucidated that “Agra Summit ended with the realization within subcontinent that unless there is movement on the Kashmir dispute, Pakistan and India will continue to remain locked in an adversarial relationship which will continue to deny South Asia peace and development”.

If Kashmir dispute settled amicably the most effective peace dividend would be South Asian Region. It will provide strong platform for regional integration, stability, development and economic interdependence which is relevant in our times and most of regions like America Europe, South East Asia, Middle East, Central Asia and even Africa are moving further for regional integration for economic reasons. India and Pakistan has spent a large amount of its money for nuclearization of South Asia. Now they have become rational and wanted to resolve their differences through bilateral negotiations.

SAARC in the most badly affected area due to its stalemate, if both Pakistan and India maintain good neighborly relations in future it will benefit SAARC. China has applied for SAARC membership, if China become effective member of SAARC destiny of South Asia may change.

A peaceful settlement with Pakistan can boost India’s image as a responsible and peace living country an increase its chances for acquiring permanent seat in Security Council.

India's endorsement of US NMD Program and US joint Chief of Staff's visit to India on the same day of Agra summit are well coordinated and significant as the dates and timings of the above events are not coincidental.

Conclusion

Summit and other high level international conferences are the diplomatic comparable of calculating out one's life in coffee spoons. They reveal little and usually change little. Sometimes, a series of such encounters can raise the curtain and show us the nature of drama in which our lives are set. They do so as it is a recurrent theme in all drama, real and fictional by showing how little we have settled for.

Indo-Pak Summit would bring tangible changes in confrontational politics of the region even though the core issue remains unresolved. The inconclusive Agra Summit and stalemate after Summit indicate that issues of Kashmir could be resolved through bilateral negotiations.

The failure of Agra Summit between India and Pakistan was example of a power deeply unready for compromise. As international community and Pakistan wants Kashmir imbroglio to be resolved according to wishes of Kashmir. The United Nations Security Council resolutions calling her for each and every individual Kashmir vote in a United Nations organized plebiscite remain the solution to Kashmir. The UN resolutions constitute binding international law. The longer the UN resolutions remain unimplemented, the greater is nuclear threat in South Asia. There must be honorable solution of Kashmir accepted by the affected people of Indian held Kashmir.

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