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PAKISTAN- INDIA RIVALRY HAMPERING THE SAARC TO BECOME A WORTHWHILE FORUM

Abstract

The states of South Asia are favourably inclined towards regional cooperation. They recognize the benefits of promoting active economic ties and trade in the region. However, the SAARC organization has not been successful in achieving the declared objectives of regional cooperation. SAARC performance is adversely affected by the troubled India-Pakistan relations. The disputes that have undermined Indo-Pakistan relations include: Kashmir, Kargil, the Wuller Barrage, the Baghliar Dam, and the Siachen dispute. As long as these disputes are not resolved and India-Pakistan improves their bilateral relations, the full potential of SAARC cannot be realized.

Key Words: SAARC, India, Pakistan, Kashmir, Wuller Barrage, The Baghliar Dam, Siachen

Introduction

South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) was established in December 1985 at Dhaka with the objective of promoting regional cooperation, trade and economic ties amongst the states of South Asia. The founders of the SAARC were influenced by the success of regional cooperation and integration in the Europe and South East Asia.

The SAARC has been functioning since 1985 but it could not become an active organization and the dream of greater cooperation could not materialize fully. The bilateral problems of the smaller states of the region have been the major obstacle to cooperation. The SAARC Charter included two provisions to separate it from the bilateral problems. First, the charter provided that bilateral issues could not be raised in the SAARC meetings. Second, all decisions were to be taken with the consent of all members. This was to assure India that all other members would not use the SAARC forum against India. The principle of unanimity for decision making assured that.

Despite all this the working of SAARC was affected for some years because of differences between Sri Lanka and India on Tamil insurgency in Sri Lanka. Similarly, the temporary problems in India-Nepal relations had a negative impact on SAARC.

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The most serious obstacle to regional cooperation in South Asia is the troubled relationship between India and Pakistan dating back to 1947 when these two states become independent. The mutual distrust and a host of political, economic and security problems undermined their bilateral relations.

Pakistan and India are bigger countries in SAARC. Their troubled relations deeply impacted the SAARC. Its working has virtually become a hostage to India-Pakistan disputes and problems. The SAARC passed a large number of resolutions but economic and trade relations could not take off. The region continued to be divided and interaction among the members is limited and slow.

Pakistan-India Realitions

India-Pakistan bilateral relations occupy the center-stage of South Asian diplomacy. Pakistan, a creation of the partition of India on the basis of the two-nation theory, challenged India nationalism. The first war in Kashmir and other problems between India and Pakistan created a sense of insecurity in Pakistan. Later, other wars reinforced distrust and rivalry between India and Pakistan.

India-Pakistan relations all these years were characterized by a chilling on-war-on-peace syndrome. Both the neighbors have been engaged in an unending arms race neglecting their major problem of economic development. Each one wanted to gain a military superiority over the other.

“Another feature of India-Pakistan bilateral relationship is the mutual accusation about the interference in each other’s internal affairs. Particularly Indian interference in the Jammu and Kashmir has been the source of irritation” (Spot-Light on Regional Affairs).

Several Summit Conferences of SAARC could not be held largely because of the Pakistan India tensions. The 12th summit could not be held in 2016 in Islamabad even after a two year delay. Pakistan and India leader do not too often gather under one roof in each other’s country. Their visit .either bilateral or in connection with regional conferences are extremely rare. In its efforts to deal with its neighbors from a position to dominance, India takes the untenable stand of tackling even the accepted multi-national regional issues only bilateral and hydroelectric potentials.

“The intra-regional relations in South Asia continue to be vitiated by number of unresolved issues. As a result, mistrust pervades the regional political scene. Diplomatic initiatives. South Asia has become one of the world's largest concentration of standing armed forces with nearly two million men-in-arms and hence a large percentage of budget is spent for strengthening thin defence posture and building arsenal against their perceive enemy. Thus India and Pakistan maintain World’s fourth and thirteenth largest armies spending approximately 18 and 25 percent of their national budget for defence purpose” (Strategic Studies (Journal), Summer 1994).

Pakistan and India regularly engage in building high tension, bitter, accusations and massive troop’s mobilization. On the Pakistan side government obsessed with Kashmir. The two states are creating the-conditions for on apocalyptic nuclear showdown. The context for these developments is the unwillingness among the

political and military leaders in South Asia to confront changed realities. The bomb has changed everything except our way of thinking.

“Arms race is in progress, and nuclear weapons occupy the center-stage in South Asia's march towards militarization. Military doctrines are being inter-linked in the way that lead inexorably to nuclear war, the poor and uneducated, uninformed and powerless. The well-to-do are uninformed or possessed by the religious fundamentalism-islamic-Hindu that is rapidly changing both countries, India and Pakistan. These forces are now being wedded to nationalism in the way that suggests that the restraints operative in previous India Pakistan wars and crises may increasingly be over-ridden or suppressed. We are moving down a steep slippery slope whose bottom we have yet to see” (August-September, 2003).

India-Pakista Nuclear Rivalry

Three possible nuclear scenarios in South Asia existed after India detonated its first nuclear device in 1974.

1. Acceptance of India's nuclear monopoly.
2. An agreement to de-nuclearize the region.
3. A dangerous nuclear confrontation.

To understand why Pakistan is not willing to accept the India's nuclear monopoly, one has to turn to the history of the Subcontinent.

The nuclearization of South Asia has its origin in the antagonism and endemic hostility between India and Pakistan. Peace and stability in the region depends to a great extent on the status of relations between its two largest neighbors. Unfortunately, Pakistan and India have been at loggerheads with each other ever since they gained independence in August 1947. This adversarial relationship has profoundly affected the progress and prosperity of the two nations and the quality of life of the people on both sides of the borders.

Both countries have indeed come a long way in meeting their security needs. India has acquired the expertise to absorb and even improve upon the technology obtained from outside sources. Its armed forces are equipped with state-of-the-art weapons systems. Pakistan too has made substantial progress in selected fields. But the frequent conflicts between India and Pakistan, and continued mutual mistrust and suspicion have forced them to divert their precious resources towards increasing the size and effectiveness of their armed forces. Their defense establishment takes up more than a third of their annual budgets, which has a negative implications for economic development.

“Forty percent of the citizens of both countries live below the poverty line. Village and small towns do not have access to clean drinking water. Infant mortality rate is high. Children who survive have a life span that is much shorter than those in developed societies, Both Pakistan and India have and abysmal literacy rate” (Afroze, 1995).

New Delhi and Islamabad have depended on their military instruments to support their political objectives. Pakistan feels threatened by the presence of more than million strong army across a hostile border. India's aim of becoming a dominant

power in the region is checkmated by a powerful Pakistan. So the attempts are made in one case to remain ahead in the arms race or in the other, not to be left too far behind.

Hence, forces levels keep on rising and new weapons continue to be inducted while defence expenditures spiral upward, as military arsenals of both India and Pakistan increase in size. Thus modernization and enlargement of the Indian armed forces compelled Pakistan to increase its own force level.

Security models of India and Pakistan differ from each other as their national aims and objectives are dissimilar. India has a vision of becoming a mini-superpower in the region. India aims to become a pre-eminent nation not only in the region but also in the world. Its security model is based on the principle of dominance and of enlarging its defensive parameter. It is determined to carve out spheres of influence and is not prepared to see any other nation in South Asia following a policy, which could deter it from achieving its national objective.

India follows the “Indira Doctrine” of not allowing outside state to make inroads into what it believes to be its sole preserve. New Delhi wants to show that it has the military strength to act as the policeman of the region and that it should be given that role. By extending its reach well beyond its geographical borders, it wants to lay a claim to becoming a regional stabilizer in the Indian Ocean. Its hegemonic designs over its smaller neighbors are evident from the fact that many of its leaders, particularly those from the 'Hindu Nationalize Parties', treat South Asia as one political Unit. Most Indian strategists consider Pakistan existence as breaching the unity of the subcontinent and thus a threat to its security.

If Pakistan could not be tamed, India was determined not to let it become too strong to come in its way of establishing an India-centric South Asia. In the early years, India also carried out police action in Hyderabad Decan, occupied Junagadh and Goa, and of course forced Jammu and Kashmir to accedes, to India.

The freedom movement in Kashmir, uprisings in North East, communal disharmony in Maharashtra, and Tamil problem in the South create serious internal problem of security for Indian government. Imaginary threats from across the borders are often used to divert attention from such centrifugal tendencies. Pakistan on the other hand, feels cheated as in accordance to the principle of partition; Kashmir should have come to Pakistan. To determine the wishes of the people of Kashmir by a fair and impartial plebiscite, conducted under the auspices of the United Nation, is their demand. The security of Pakistan also has different dimensions but the main threat is to its territorial integrity. Pakistan's security can be summed up in these words, namely “Survival in a hostile environment”. It feels insecure as long as the Kashmir dispute is not settled to the satisfaction of all the three parties concerned. It believes Kashmir to be the jugular vein of Pakistan for both economic and strategic reasons.

Pakistan tried continuously to maintain a force level such that it can compel India to pay a heavy price if it uses its military instrument to brow beat Pakistan. Pakistan's security includes the protection of its one thousand (1000) Kilometer long coastline. Its security is linked to friendly neighbors in the west. Good

relations with Iran and Afghanistan form a major pillar in its security, which India tries to disrupt.

Businessmen in Pakistan are concerned about Pakistan markets being flooded by cheap, though inferior, Indian goods. They want to secure their business by not opening up trade with India. The conservative elements in Pakistan are also adamant to guard Pakistan ideological frontier, which according to them, face an onslaught from India and the west. They are afraid of the cultural invasion from India and are determined to protect their values from alien cultures.

South Asia is a region where one witnesses build-up of conventional arms race, acquisition of nuclear arsenals, circulation of small arms and drugs trade, frequent border skirmishes, insurgencies, ethnic, religious and sectarian conflicts, extra-parliamentary political violence and instability. But the most prominent issue that dominates the security relations in South Asia is perhaps the nuclear rivalry between India and Pakistan. Acquisition of nuclear weapons in south Asia is part of a long reactive process in which rival states have developed nuclear programmes. India's nuclear programme got incentive from China's nuclear explosive test; following on the heels of latter's victory over former in the 1962 territorial dispute. In May 1974, India tested its own nuclear device at Pokhran in the Rajasthan desert close to Pakistani border. A decade later, Pakistan in response to India's nuclear test, developed a programme of its own which was made public in March 1987. Zulfikar All Bhutto, the former Pakistani Prime minister, who made an abortive search for security guarantees from the US against India's nuclear threats, once expressed his country's acute sense of insecurity by stating that the Pakistanis would "eat grass" if necessary to match the Indian nuclear capability. In the 1980s and 90s, it was believed that both India and Pakistan had attained nuclear capability, although both preferred to keep nuclear ambiguity. However, in May 1998, leaving all ambiguity in the background both India and Pakistan detonated their nuclear devices. With this event, the security environment of the entire South Asia region changed drastically.

This development, according to some, has brought India and Pakistan's nuclear ability out into the open, provoked a risky arms race and added an alarming dimension to an already volatile situation in the region. Interestingly, one notices an arms race not only between the two principal protagonists but also increased spending on defence by the non-nuclear weapon states (NNWS).

India threatened Pakistan of a 'decisive battle' and Pakistan responded that it would defend itself with 'utmost resolution and determination'. India put blockade on the - Arabian Sea: Pakistan came up with a series of missile tests, and within a week the subcontinent found itself on the brink of a potentially devastation war. Although India and Pakistan are both back from the brink and tempers have since cooled down yet there still remains the question of across border terrorism between them. It may be mentioned here that one of the casualties of the India-Pakistan hostilities is the process of regional co-operation.

"The 12th SAARC summit scheduled to be held in Islamabad from 11-13 January 2003 has been postponed sine die. This is for the third time since its inception in 1985 that SAARC has suffered a blow and became a victim of the tensions

between the two members. The last summit also had to be rescheduled a number of times before it could be held in Katmandu in January 2002” (Summer, 2003).

The full-blown crises in South Asia are because of India’s overemphasis on military buildup and diplomatic pressure. This narrow conception of security has brought South Asia to a sorry-state of affairs where people starve and arms accumulate social expenditure fall while military budget rises.

In 1994, the United Nations Development programme (UNDP) in its report stated that ‘the concept of security has for too long interpreted narrowly, as security of territory from external aggression, or as protection of national interests in foreign policy or as global security from the threat of nuclear holocaust. It has been related more to nation-states than to people’. It seems that the states of South Asia have failed to appreciate and realize completely the above conception of security. As has been observed, the more security arsenals the states have built up, the more they have made their populations insecure in terms of human security. Henceforth, it is not surprising to see the countries of South Asia at the bottom rung of the table of the UNDP Human Development Report.

“The two nuclear states of South Asia, India and Pakistan, rank 115 and 127 respectively out of a total of 162 states in terms of human development indicators of the year 2000” (Mohesin, 2002).

Since the 1998 nuclear tests, there has been a large increase in Indian military spending. The Indian defence budget for 2001-2002 was set at 630 million rupees (\$13 billion). This is increased three times Pakistan's and follows an earlier increase of 28 percent which was largely that Pakistan's entirely military budget. This issue of nuclear proliferation on the South Asia region has grown in importance since the end of cold war. Technology has played an important role in the development and production of nuclear weapons. In an attempt to meet the threat of external forces the states of India and Pakistan have developed technologies as their method to counter each other.

India and Pakistan are on the threshold of nuclear weaponization in the region that has significant border disputes. This weaponization of the region has presented significant problem in policy planning and development of -SAARC. If there is a continued increase of nuclear weapons on the South Asian region then this region will be a source of continued conflict into the next century.

“The problem of Kashmir is one example in which further hostilities may rise. Meanwhile, the Kashmir problem rose to the top of the local Security agenda again in 1989-1990 and had remained there since. The Kashmir dispute is so acute that it evokes the specter of nuclear war in the subcontinent a risk that seemed to become the technically realistic is the late 1980s. It is estimated that India has a stockpile of approximately 90-110 nuclear warheads, which it is through to be expanding. While Pakistan has nearly (100-120) N. warheads” (Chander, 2002) (www. Businessinsider.com/nine-nations-have-nukes-heres-how-many-each-country-has-2014-6).

India-Pakistan interaction acquired a new context with the nuclear test of May 1998 when relations hit a new low. The extreme bitterness and tension between India and Pakistan in the period after nuclear test, did bring with realization on

both side that thing could not continue in the same manner indefinitely and that a meeting ground had to be found. Thing looking up again as Indian Prime Minister Mr. Vajpayee met Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif at New York in September 1998. It was decided that foreign secretary level talk would be held between India and Pakistan and a direct bus service between New Delhi and Lahore was proposed. The talks at foreign secretaries' level held in October 1998, but did not make concrete advances on major issues. Due to Bus diplomacy Indo-Pakistan relation took a new turn in the region. But Kargil war shattered the faith and trust and goodwill created in Lahore in 1999.

Major Issues Of Conflict

Kashmir

Kashmir is the most contentious issue between Pakistan and India. It is one of the unsettled issues of the end of the British rule in India. This princely has an overwhelmingly Muslim population but its ruler was non Muslim. Kashmir's business, trade and road links were mere with Pakistani territory. It was expected that Kashmir would join Pakistan and its Muslim population supported that. However, the non-Muslim ruler of Kashmir conspired with the congress leadership to join India in October 1947. The ordinary Muslim revolted against this decision.

The UN Security Council decided through resolutions in 1948-49 to let the people of Kashmir decide through referendum whether they wanted to join India or Pakistan. India initially accepted the referendum principle but it changed its policy in 1953 and refused to allow the UN to hold a referendum. This caused a major political and security conflict between India and Pakistan. They went to war on Kashmir in 1948 and 1965. In addition to this there were several small or limited conflicts on the Line of Control in Kashmir. In December 1971 war the armed forces of Pakistan and India fought each other in Kashmir in addition to the war in East Pakistan and on India-West Pakistan border. Since then the Kashmir issue has remained unresolved.

India considers Kashmir an integral part of India. So this dispute of Kashmir has become the bone of contention between India and Pakistan. In the late 1980 and early 1990s this issue got much attention and people 'started armed struggle against the Indian rule indigenously. So the period of 1990-2000 has reflected the India Pakistan rivalries that affected the South Asia region generally and SAARC organization especially.

The Kargil Episode

The armed clash between Pakistan and India took place in the Kargil area of Kashmir in May-July 1999. The conflict was initiated by Kashmiri freedom fighters. Later Pakistan's regular forces joined in.

“The decision by Pakistan to support the Kashmir freedom fighters with its irregular forces stationed in the northern areas, took the two countries to the brink of war. The heights over looking that vital road linking Srinagar to the Siachin were vacated by the Indian soldier during winter due to the difficulties inherent in living at altitudes of over 15000 ft. Pakistani authorities decided to seize this opportunity and occupied the highest across the LOC” (Matinuddin, 2003).

The Kargil area comprises high mountains, glaciers and marshy areas can never be demarcated. This line runs through the India Occupied Kashmir, near Drass, Kargil. Here in the north, this line is 5000 meters higher than the sea level.

These tops and ridges are always covered with thick snow. This area is 48 Kilometers long and 10 to 12 km wide. Above Drass and Kargil, 500 square meters are non-demarcated area. It is impossible to keep a continuous check in that area during the whole year. We go to the further east from Kargil, there is Leh, the capital of Laddakh, is situated. All these areas are strategically important for India, because of the road “Sri Nagar-Leh Highway” which is commonly known as “Indian National Highway One-A” this road is used to supply food and military equipment to Siachen, and to those divisions stationed at Acsai-Chen.

In April 1984, India occupied 7 miles long area of Siachen glacier along with the Chineses border. In 1988, India occupied another area “Khar Sector”. In this way India spoiled the control line thrice.

In May 1998, India dated nuclear device and proved her hegemonic approach. These explosions disturb the balance of power in the region to the balance of terror. Pakistan, to neutralize India’s nuclear moves, exploded her own nuclear devices in the end of May. Now both India and Pakistan had become ‘De-facto’ nuclear power, and the balance Of terror in the region converted again to the balance of power.

India had been targeting the innocent people of Kashmir for the last 52 years. During the genocide of Kashmiris, more than 70,000 Muslim Kashmiris had been massacred. Millions of rapes took place and there was not observed any respect for the elder and even for the children. For this reason, Kashmiri Freedom Fighters have been sped up their movement for the last ten years.

When the Indian Army returned to their posts in the middle of May 1999, they came to know about the Mujahideen’s take-over. About two hundred Indian soldiers were killed during their trial to reach back at the post. Mujahideen seized the “Sri-Nagar-Leh Highway” by heavy-fire.

“The news broke out and every Indian civil and military official and leader shocked. In the beginning, it was taken as a usual move and was expected that some thousands of Indian soldiers could take the Kargil posts back within a couple of weeks. But soon it was felt that, was a childish thought. Mujahideen were stationed at the most altitude and they could observe the movements of Indian Army. American satellites were providing them with the information that hardly estimated number if the freedom fighter was 500, but the Indian Army was not seemingly succeeded to vacate those posts” (The Front Line, 1999).

Another Indian source says;

“India’s intelligence agency could not get even a bit of information earlier than the Mujahideen’s moves and planning to the Kargil sector” (The India Today, 1999).

The courage and determination of the men of the Northern Light Infantry and the Mujahideen, coupled with difficult terrain, did not allow the Indian army to bulldoze its way into Kashmir, as they had done in 1947-48. The daily advance of the Indian army was not being measured in meters rather than miles, nor could it

repeat its self-styled lightening campaign of 1965, and unlike 1971, it could not think of cutting Pakistan down to size because of the nuclear weapons in Pakistan's arsenals.

Indian newspaper the Hindustan Times wrote:

“Fears of the conflict escalating into another all-out war between a nuclear India and Pakistan drew the attention of several world leaders. They appealed to the two countries to respect the Line of Control and try and find an amicable solution to this recent crisis in the disputed territory. Better sense prevailed and Nawaz Sharif accepted the demand of the United States and other major powers to withdraw his forces from across the Line of Control. This was not willingly accepted by the military establishment and many other political parties, who believed that they could hold on to the peaks and force India to the negotiating table” (The Hindustan Times, 1999).

India's objective of insisting on bilateralism to solve disputes with Pakistan is not without ulterior motives. Being in occupation of a very large portion of the disputed state, it believes, it can maintain the status quo in direct negotiations with Pakistan without any mediator. It feels that it can get the upper hand on a smaller neighbor if no outside power is involved. India would not like the third party to learn of the atrocities its security agencies are committing on the innocent citizens of the valley. With an agreement reached in the presence of the third party mediator, it would be difficult for India to renege on any commitment it might make, which has been the case on several occasions in the past. Due to this Kargil conflict, the Kashmir issue came out of frigidity. It became the nuclear flash point and Kargil issue was made internationalized. India and Pakistan both came to know their potentials. The importance of this South Asia region became greater in the eyes of the international community.

The Wullar Barrage Dispute

India is building power generation and water storage projects in Kashmir without taking into account its negative impacts on the availability of river water in Pakistan. Some of these projects violated the provisions of the Indus Waters Treaty, 1960 that placed restrictions on use of river water in Kashmir beyond specified methods and limits. In the case of the Salal Dam and the Wullar Barrage in Kashmir, it violated the provisions of the India Water Treaty. Pakistan objected to the construction of these dams, especially the Wullar Barrage.

“The difference over the Salal Dam and Wullar Barrage have intensified the existing feelings of mistrust between the, two countries. The dispute over Salal Dam on the Chenab River in India-held Kashmir arose in 1970 and after prolonged negotiations it was settled to the mutual satisfactions of both parties. An agreement on the design of the Salal Dam project was to signed on 14 April 1978 providing that in order not to prevent the free flow of water to Pakistan the height of the darn would be little less than 10 meters instead of the 12 meters was originally proposed” (Pakistan Horizon (Quarterly Journal), 1979).

This Wullar Barrage dispute arose in 1985. The Wullar Lake project on Jhelum River comprising a barrage of 439 feet in length is being constructed purportedly with a view to improving navigation, during the winter months between Wullar

Lake and Baramula. From the Pakistan perspective the control of water flow by constructing Wullar Barrage on the Jhelum would be a crippling blow to the economics of Pakistan and Azad Kashmir. Besides endangering millions of acres of productive land India will only have to press a button to unleash a flood or create drought condition in the region. The Wullar Barrage could also affect the supply of water to the Mangla Dam, which is fed by the Jhelum. Moreover the control of the Jhelum by India will have severely damaging consequences for Pakistan's defence infrastructure.

Indian government started the construction of Wullar Barrage in 1984. In 1985 Pakistan has objected the construction of the barrage. According to the Indus Water Treaty 1960:

“It is provided that India is entitled to construct an incidental storage work on the River Jhelum which does not exceed 10,000 acre feet of water. India on the other hand engaged in building a barrage of 300,000-acre feet storage capacity, which is thirty times more than the permitted capacity” (Nasrullah, 1991).

“Pakistan's complaint was first taken up by the permanent Indus commission which referred the matter in 1987 back to the two movements for negotiations. The representatives of the two governments (India and Pakistan) met in October 1987, when India agreed to suspend all construction work. India attempted to assure Pakistan that Wullar Barrage would not diminish the usual water flow of the Jhelum River. Following this meeting several talks were held in subsequent years but the deadlock has persisted” (Kumar, 1990).

The Baghliar Dam Issue

This is another water related issue that has a negative impact on India-Pakistan relations.

“Pakistan has objected to the construction of the Baghliar Dam, saying that it can be used to store water from the Chenab River. The project provides for submerged gate spillway, allowing India to increase the dam's storage capacity to 164,000 acres feet and the power to stop water for about 26 days during December, January and February” (Dawn , 2004).

Pakistan maintained that the Baghliar project is a violation of the Indus Basin Water Treaty. Under the terms of the Treaty India cannot construct any project on the River Chanab without Pakistan's prior approval. Further, Article (1-a) of the Treaty says that the Neutral Expert must deal any difference that could not be resolved by the Indus Basin Commission and the two governments. It also provides that the matter may also be referred to the Arbitral Court. Indian policy of no-implementing the treaties, in the past, has been a persistent cause of concern among its neighbors. As for as implementation of the Indus Basin Treaty concerned a similar situation arose between India and Pakistan on the Salal Dam issue, but the matter was finally resolved through bilater negotiations and the conclusion of Salal Dam Treaty in 1978.

As the Salal Dam issue was resolved through talks, the Baghliar Dam issue can also be settled in the same way. And once the issue related to water are discussed and -settled, it can help to warm up ties between Pakistan and India.

After the visit to the dam site on October 21, 2003 Pakistan's technical experts team confirmed that the dam was being executed in violation of the 190 bilateral Indus Waters Treaty in view non-tenability of India's contention about unsuitability of the site for Litigated' spillways and the 'poundage' capacity exceeding twice the permissible limit under the Indus Water Treaty. After exhaustive Consultations at Pakistan Commission for Indus water, in Lahore, on November 7, 2003, Pakistan served the second and the final notice on India to immediately settle the Baghliar Dam issue in its first notice on India June 2003. Pakistan has asked India to suspend construction work on the dam, arrange for an inspection tour of the project site and resolve the issue by December 31, 2003.

“Pakistan's main concern is that the structure would provide India the capability to manipulate flow of water to Pakistan's disadvantage. One serious consequence is that it would arm India with the capability to cause acute water shortage in Pakistan, Technical expert warn it could deprive Pakistan of up to 8,000 cusecs of water per day” (Dawn, 2003).

On January 16, 2004, Pakistan and Indian officials began negotiations in an effort to resolve their dispute over a Baghliar Darn. It was stated that a solution to the long standing Baghliar dispute could be achieved on a “give and take” basis.

The Siachen Dispute

Another point of conflict is the Siachen Glacier. It is located where the formal demarcations of the Line of Control in Kashmir end. It is a large snow covered area beyond the last point of the Line of Control called NJ 9842 (Lavoy, 2009).

“The inhospitable climate condition of the region prevented both India and Pakistan from drawing up a detailed demarcation in the past. The glacier is situated in the Baltistan district which is a Part of Pakistan’s Northern Areas” (The Frontier Post, 1993).

Close to the border of China Siachen came into the lime light in April 1984 when India moved its troops into the area. Until then it was under Pakistan administrative control. The Pakistan army quickly moved to check India's expansionist moves and thwarted its bid to establish its military hegemony.

“India's interest in this snow bound land is inspired by strategic motives. India wanted to reach close to the Karakoram Highway the Pakistan China Borders. Indian strategist believes that in order to be a Central Asia power, India must manage to secure direct protected access to the Karakoram” (Iqbal, 1989).

The Siachen Glacier had been under the actual control of Pakistan from 1947 to 1983. All the foreign expeditions which passed through the area on their way to K-2 always sought permission from Pakistan and this fact had never been challenged by India.

“Many maps issued by the United States the United Nations the Readers Digest Atlas and the All as prepared by Encyclopedia Britannica showed the glacier as a part of Pakistan. However, India lays claim not only to this area but to the entire state of Jammu and Kashmir” (Sheikh, 1989).

Fighting over Siachen took place in late 1987 and early 1988. Pakistan and India have also held negotiations at defence secretary level to resolve this issue.

“Five rounds of talks were held, starting from January 1986 and ending in June 1989, at the end of the fifth round, both countries agreed to work towards the settlement of the Siachen dispute based on redeployment of forces to the pre-Simla position in order to reduce the chances of conflict” (Pakistan Horizon, 1989).

But soon after the agreement India introduced an interpretation that it meant partial withdrawal on both sides just to avoid armed conflict, thus leaving itself in the advantageous position of controlling the heights.

“Pakistan's stand has been that the troops should be withdrawn to their position in 1972, before the Simla Agreement meaning thereby that New Delhi must vacate the encroachment. The 6th round of defence secretary level talks was held in New Delhi in November 1992. The talks failed because India insisted on the recognition of the ground realities which was not acceptable to Pakistan” (Pakistan Time, 1993).

India's aggression in Siachen is a part of the over-all strategy to establish authority and control over the dispute area, which is unacceptable to Pakistan. The current Kashmir uprising interrupted the strategic dialogue between the two states and the Siachen issue appears to have been submerged in the larger issue of Jammu and Kashmir.

Neither the leaders of India and Pakistan nor other South Asian countries have been able to find a way to reduce India-Pakistan tension. The differences in their interests have undermined regional cooperation.

“The existence of complex dispute like the ongoing Kashmir dispute makes it imperative that the all concerned should be extra careful and avoid sending signals that an irreparably damage the process that has been secured with so many difficulties and enormous efforts” (The News, 2003).

The leaders of the SAARC countries should work hard to remove mutual distrust and they should make sincere efforts to resolve all kinds of problems that have negative implications for their bilateral relations and regional cooperation.

Conclusion

Being the two major states of South Asia, India and Pakistan need to provide lead to cooperation in South Asia and become the major stakeholders in the South Asia cooperation, otherwise it will not be a success. If India has to show greater accommodation for the small partners, Pakistan needs to take route of SAARC without mixing it with its bilateral disputes with India. It serves Pakistan's interest to expand areas of cooperation with India in order to resolve its differences and disputes with its neighbors. Similarly if India has to play its due role in world politics, it has to find solutions to the disputes with Pakistan, including Kashmir. The SAARC leaders should know that they have to devise new ways and means to give a happy life to their millions of people through a policy of conflict resolution and economic cooperation.

It is needed for strengthening SAARC and transforming it into a vibrant regional body on the line of ASEAN and the European Union. India and Pakistan should discuss and resolve the Kashmir issue including other minor issues first as SAARC has been suffering since its inception.

SAARC's goal is economic progress and development through cooperation among all its member states. The prerequisite for this is the absence of conflict and hostility, most notably between India and Pakistan. Whether this is achieved through SAARC or through some other mechanism (e.g: bilateral talks) is irrelevant. What counts is that they achieve regional harmony. Regional cooperation in South Asia can work-but only if the bilateral problems among its members especially between Pakistan and India, are resolved.

Bilateral tensions are preventing the SAARC from adopting a politico-security role. The disputes between India and Pakistan have played a detrimental role in the socio-economic progress of SAARC. Kashmir has been described- as the most dangerous dispute in the world. A just solution to this dispute holds the key to peace and security in South Asia. All efforts need to be concentrated on either immediate conflict resolution or on arriving at an agreement on normalization of relations pending settlement of disputes.

If the problems between Pakistan and India are resolved, the SAARC can quickly become an active and effective organization. The salvation of people of South Asia lies with greater regional cooperation for peace and socio-economic development. The SAARC offers an excellent framework for regional cooperation. This has to be made instrumental to promoting active regional cooperation. All members states need to address this challenge.

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