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Can the Principle of Coexistence between India and Pakistan Help to Achieve Peace and Prosperity in the region?¹

This study investigates and analyzes in the historical background of India-Pakistan relations in order to understand the nature of their association and how their mutual relations can be improved. It argues that the history of these countries, throughout show their political rivalry and military conflicts that has put them far behind as compared to the other nations of the world, in economic terms. However, if they apply the principle of co-existence, as the basic guiding principle for their relationship, tensions can be reduced and as a result steps towards normalcy, between the two nations, could be taken. After independence, India and Pakistan indulged in confrontations and conflicts, wars and joined different foreign-based security alliances as hedge against each other. This study intends to examine how, despite being locked in a pattern of enduring conflict, these two countries can still convene, negotiate and produce agreements and work together if they start following the principle of coexistence. Current research is significant because it will help to trace out the historical rivalry between the two. Author believes that academic and intellectual exchanges, combined with socio-cultural coordination can help create better understanding not only between people of both countries but also result in bringing peace to South Asia. Historians have not yet given proper attention to the subject and it is high time to understand and underline what kind of relationship these countries should develop and how both can address their issues. Therefore, this paper may be considered in the category of persuasive writing as it aims at persuading the concerned parties to develop friendly ties.

Introduction

India and Pakistan, as two neighboring countries with long borders and an even longer history of interaction, have not attained the degree of economic development, peace and prosperity, which they should have with their given resources. The two has been struggling to develop cordial relations but the pull of rancor history has so far prevented that goal from being achieved. Consequently, South Asia has witnessed wars, extremism, devastation, poverty and instability and these countries are paying a very heavy price of their animosity. SAARC was established in 1985 to develop socio-cultural and economic ties among the

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member states but it has made little progress in building solid relations between India and Pakistan. Therefore, this study endeavors to investigate and explore the causes and end-effects of the persisting contentions between India and Pakistan and their inability to address sensitive issues like Kashmir.

The underlying hypothesis of this paper is that instead of becoming a battleground of proxy wars of superpowers, both India and Pakistan should focus on building friendly ties, which can help bring peace and prosperity in the region. After successfully testing nuclear bombs and further becoming part of lethal arms race, both states cannot afford more wars. Any hot-pursuit option would bring nothing but complete annihilation of both the countries. Current research, while touching upon major causes of mutual disputes and differences, would recommend measures which, if adopted, can help to foster friendly ties and develop fruitful socio-economic cooperation between them. A peep into the history of the world especially Europe suffices to prove that after the large scale wars of the past 200 years it was only through principles of co-existence and a policy of live and let live that helped solve issues and brought about peace and prosperity among states and regions.

Statement of Problem

Politically South Asia has been one of the most unstable parts of the world and has remained a battleground for proxy wars of super powers. Its most striking feature has been the political and military rivalry of India and Pakistan many factors. There is no denying to the fact that both countries have been at loggerheads since independence of 1947.² Whether during the cold war era or-after the devastating event of 9/11, there have been occasions for peaceful resolutions of disputes between them but somehow mutual hostility continues to date. In the currently concluded China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC)³ between China and Pakistan, countries under discussion, have opted for opposing each other and have chosen rival blocks that increased animosity for which they are paying a high price in the form of spending heavily on defense rather than eradicating poverty. This trend and mindset is rooted in their post-colonial relations.

The conflict between India and Pakistan originated in their history with bad decisions of the colonial power especially regarding Kashmir and Radcliffe Award.⁴ Lord Mountbatten, the first Governor-General of independent India (Bharat) assisted them to absorb princely States by hook or crook. Thus, deep seed of enmity were sown, which resulted and manifested into conspiracies to destabilize each other. India was successful in its attempt to separate East Pakistan by providing political, financial and military support to the secessionists of Bengal. As a result Bangladesh was created in 1971.⁵ But India also has many complaints against non-state actors of the region and blames Pakistan for any incident inside its western border and calls it "cross border terrorism".⁶ No wonder both are living in a state of fear, terror and backlash from each other which pits against rather than fro. The-price of their unrelenting conflict, is being paid by the common man, on both sides of the border-who is facing ignominy, poverty and unemployment because their countries are allocating more on defense budgets than on health and education.⁷

History and Mutual Disputes

History of conflict between India and Pakistan is long. Over the years issues like Kashmir, assets, water distribution, wars of 1948, 1965, 1971, Indian atomic explosion in 1974 and counter blasts of Pakistan, Siachen, Brasstacks, Kargil war, and attacks on Indian parliament, and Bombay etc., have led the two farther and farther away from each other.

However, the bone of contention⁸ between India and Pakistan is a territorial dispute that is Kashmir issue. The June 3 Plan 1947, a handiwork of Lord Mountbatten, left a legacy of disputes because it partitioned not only India but also divided Punjab and Bengal with clearly defined the future of princely states. The Radcliffe Award provided an opening to India as Lord Mountbatten helped get a land access to Kashmir to appease Jawaharlal Nehru.⁹ As per his directive, the princely States, keeping in view of geographical location and desires of their population, were to decide their future. However, this was the underhand dealing of the Hindu Raja Hari Singh with Lord Mountbatten that allowed the Indian Government to occupy Kashmir by use of military force.¹⁰ After few months of its creation Pakistan encountered war with India because of Kashmir Issue and thus a history of wars was initiated.

Another dispute is about the largest glacier in the world, Siachen Glacier that India suddenly and swiftly captured in 1984. It had been a buffer zone because of its extremely cold weather, height and permanent snow, but after the start of hostilities, has claimed the lives of, and maimed, thousands of soldiers on both sides because of frost-bite and other diseases along with mindless killings.¹¹ Another old disputed land is Sir Creek. It is a 60 miles alternating strip of water channels between India and Pakistan. This strip has more economic importance than military.¹²

Besides, territorial clashes, there are new disputes like water-issue including Wullar Barrage, Kishanganga¹³ Hydropower project because India is constructing a series of dams in the Indian-occupied Kashmir and thereby seriously violating the Indus Water Treaty concluded in 1960.¹⁴ Cross-border terrorism has become a major hurdle because it is not only India who is blaming Pakistan's involvement in Indian Parliament incident¹⁵ and Bombay attacks¹⁶ but Pakistan is also holding Indian non state actors and secret agencies responsible for uprisings in Baluchistan¹⁷ and Karachi.¹⁸ Though a number of attempts have been made to negotiate and solve their issues but both the countries have not developed any convincing mechanism to address their issues.

The most unfortunate dilemma of these two states is that they are not ready to leave behind their pre-partition approach, heritage of controversies and wars. Kashmir has remained the most sensitive point of contention between them and India seems to be overlooking the UN Security Council resolution, which allowed the right of self-determination to the Kashmiris.¹⁹ Currently even the massive deployment in Indian held Kashmir has failed to suppress the desire of the Kashmir for 'self-determination'. Indian army employs all resources without caring for level of brutality and Human Rights violation.²⁰ While the two countries have engaged in wars on different issues, their unnecessary involvement in Afghanistan has further hindered any development towards peace. In fact, post 9/11 period has brought more challenges to the peace and stability of Pakistan who

opted to fight war on terror as frontline state and this has brought all kinds of havocs to itself both on internal and external levels. India has exploited this situation and related the freedom movement of Kashmiris with global violence. The over-spoiling of America for-India in regard to atomic advancement²¹ and the promise to help getting United Nations Security Council seat,²² has further alarmed Pakistan-and therefore, it has immense reservations about the intentions of US in the region.²³

India has applied delaying tactics and whenever some negative incident takes place inside-the country, she blames Pakistan non state actors for engineering such incidents. For example on occasions like attack on Samjhota Express, assault on Indian parliament and infamous Mumbai attacks²⁴ and recent Pathankot attack and have been attributed to be the handiwork of non-state actors in Pakistan. Regardless of the fact Pakistan perceives that at many occasions it was proven that its own residents or state authorities²⁵ were involved in such deadly incidents.²⁶ All these facts demonstrate that in India there are 'howks' or some people who are not ready to normalize relations with Pakistan. On the other hand problems like Wullar Barrage, Kishanganga Hydropower project, regardless of a several round of talks, were never resolved.

The two countries have made South Asia one of the most militarized areas in the world because of their mutual mistrust and attempt to destabilize each other. In spite of efforts, of numerous governments on both sides to settle their differences, it seems that whenever India and Pakistan have tried to come closer and start negotiations, some unexpected and horrible incidents have ruined the process.²⁷ Every time some unseen hand destroys the attempts to stabilize the relations. Now it is clear to every-one that there are some non-state actors in both sides of the border who do not want the relations between the two countries should be normalized. At any given moment and event both countries refer back to the old blame-game against each other. It is also important to mention here that India always use its diplomatic tricks to reject offer for negotiation made by Pakistan and throws away the then increasing international pressure for an early starting of two-sided talks.²⁸ India had further distorted the conditions in its favor by holding talks with freedom-fighters and occupied Kashmir's political parties. Their unreliable policies and inflexible behavior towards the issue and especially ill response to hold referendum in Indian held Kashmir has damaged all kinds of efforts for peace in South Asia.

There is another factor that India and Pakistan had been in opposite blocks during the Cold War Era. These were not only the international pressures but also their mutual tussle and sense of insecurity that made them to go against each other. Though apparently India claimed to remain non-aligned but it exploited both USSR and US for its own gains, however, India's alliance with USSR was an open secret.

After cold war US emerged as uni-polar power²⁹ with a new philosophy, very different from Cold War Era. This time anti-Islam phobia became a vehicle to divide the world which resulted in 9/11 incident and thereby the world found itself divided. Either they were to become a party to war on terror or had to face music from Allied forces 'onslaught. Pakistan had no choice but to join the war on terror but India very enthusiastically, with a free will offered its land, military resources

to suppress Al-Qaeda hideouts in Afghanistan. But India seems to have taken more advantage in shaping internal and external policies of Afghanistan as compared to Pakistan³⁰ and because of its fast growing business sector, has been provided a proactive role in Afghanistan. Pakistan whereas has made all sort of sacrifices to suppress extremism and succumbed to American demands since 9/11 to do more but without gaining much of strategic advantages in the region.

History of Dialogues

Despite long history of controversies, conflicts and wars, number of efforts were made to address disputes through bilateral, multilateral and UN mediations. The history of peace talks between India and Pakistan is as long as the establishment of both countries. Starting from Lord Mountbatten's personal efforts, Gandhi's observation fasting if India did not pay Pakistan's financial share, Nehru-Liaquat Pact, reference of Kashmir Issue to UN, etc. Many international key players tried to play their role in conflict resolution. These efforts remained at two levels, bilateral talks and through UN mediation. Indus Water treaty was partly due to the role of UN and partly the World Bank but in the Tashkent Declaration, main role was played by USSR. Through Simla Accord between India and Pakistan in 1972,³¹ both Prime Ministers Indra Gandhi and Z.A. Bhutto (1971-1977) agreed to solve disputes through bilateral negotiations; however this mechanism failed to produce results. Even during Zia period India and Pakistani forces experienced warlike situation as Pakistan was engaged in its western border in Afghanistan against USSR occupation of Afghanistan. However, relief in tension was felt when old conservative style of leadership changed. In both the countries when Pakistani and Indian Prime Ministers Mian Nawaz Sharif and Mr. I.K Gujral met and decided to start composite dialogue on different issues including the Kashmir issue in 1997. The fruit of this development was Lahore Declaration in 1999 but Kargil war halted the process.³²

Initially, General Musharraf adopted old Kashmir policy but then thought out of box to address the Kashmir issue. Thus, the peace talks restarted in 2004,³³ opportunity was provided by the 12th SAARC Summit held in Islamabad. The Indian Prime Minister Mr. Atal Bihari Vajpayee attended the summit and President of Pakistan General Pervaiz Musharraf extended him a red-carpet welcome.³⁴ Although task for leaders of these countries to restart talks was massive but they decided to begin multiple negotiations to cover various areas. Though Musharraf went far ahead then normal to solve the Kashmir Issue but all his efforts proved fruitless.³⁵ Momentum of the peace talks suffered from a number of unusual incidents in India starting from the explosion on Samjhuta Express train in 2007³⁶, Mumbai assaults in 2008 and Pathankot attack 2016. All these events added to delay the contacts for peace, which in turn helped a further deterioration in relations. After careful study of causes and repercussions of discontinuity, Prime Ministers Gillani and Manmohan Singh agreed to start over the peace talks; both met at Sharm Al Sheikh, Egypt in 2009.³⁷ In 2011, two years later the talks were resumed at secretary- level and there were various rounds of discussion covering multiple level disputes between the two states. But time and again these talks Peace procedure was at the end of the day grabbed the speed after President Zardari's personal tour to India in 2012 yet it is not without hurdles. The cross border tensions of this year and death sentence of Afzal Guru by India did not help matters.³⁸ The history of talks between India and Pakistan proves that

both the concerned parties have not fully developed confidence on the sincere intentions of the other side, despite a number of positive confidence building measures (CBM).

Quite recently other methods were devised by India and Pakistan, which is known as Track II and Track III policies to address issues.³⁹ Thus, a series of unofficial negotiations between leading retired civil and military bureaucrats and civil society including intellectuals, writers, media persons and media houses were held at times to ease the tensions. These attempts bore fruits because they helped to diffuse the tension. Track II talks are conducted by retired civil and military top ranking officers while Track III is being operated through civil society.⁴⁰ This people-to-people contact has been quite helpful in bringing the nations closer and changing the mindset of the countries and proved to be more effective as it was observed by many at different levels that most of the people in both countries love each other or at least are not as full of hatred and dislike as sometimes portrayed by a few biased media sources. During this period, once Pakistan was ready grant special status to India like the Most-Favorite-Nation, for improving economic ties and for initiating confidence building measures (CBMs) to lead a way to resolve the conflicts among two nations but failed. All these strategies and methods can only be successful if both countries develop environment of trust and faithfulness towards each other because until unless they would not create trust between themselves both of them can not develop peace towards each other. On the other hand there is no denying the fact that both Pakistan and India need to find a way to resolve the disputes between them, including Kashmir, which is the root cause of continued tensions and an ambience of confrontation that poses a grave threat to peace and peace talks. India claimed that an attack on the Indian army base in Uri has happened on 18 September 2016.⁴¹ Within few minutes, without investigation and inquiry, the Indian government and media immediately accused Pakistan by saying that the attackers had infiltrated from Pakistan.⁴² Indian Prime Minister Narendra Moodi said that the perpetrators of this attack would not go unpunished. In the meantime, it was been reported that the Indian army has claimed that they have anticipate another attempt by 10-12 terrorists to infiltrate the Uri sector and they have killed the intruders.

Islamabad reacted and held that as regarding the Indian claims it is very difficult to accept this proposition because of tight border security on Indian side.⁴³ There is also another view among political analysts that the Uri incident like the Pathankot, attack seems to be a 'false flag Indian operation'.⁴⁴ That in the backdrop of a killing spree by the Indian security forces in the Indian-held Kashmir that has killed 87 persons and wounded thousands, India was feeling the heat of growing condemnation from the international community. Islamabad feels that this move on the part of Delhi was "a calculated attempt to deflect the attention of the world community from the Indian brutalities."

Since then, like Bombay Attack in 2008, Uri incident Delhi has skillfully using to divert the current wave of Kashmir independent movement. Delhi has adopted an organized propaganda to prove that 'the current uprising in Kashmir was Pakistani sponsored terrorism. Thus Delhi's old policy to isolate Pakistan has been speeded up. This incident helped India to declare it an "act of terrorism and throw the blame on Pakistan with a view to counter Pakistani diplomatic offensive

to sensitize the international fraternity on human rights violations in Kashmir and the need to resolve the issue in conformity with UN resolutions.” Indian Prime Minister not only used Uri incident to boycott the SAARC Conference to be held on 15-16 November 2016, in Islamabad that was eventually postponed for indefinite time but terrorized Pakistan diplomatic staff in Delhi by using undiplomatic practices.

India has been using Afghanistan soil to destabilize Pakistan in general to sabotage the CPEC project in particular but instead restricting its activities to the development projects in Afghanistan India has enlisted support of Kabul to malign Pakistan’s all good efforts to bring peace and stability in Afghanistan. Even, in recently occurred Heart of Asia conference held on 3-4 December 2016, both India and Afghanistan criticized Islamabad’s role in the region and blamed Pakistan for ‘cross border terrorism’.⁴⁵ If the two nuclear power wish to stay as responsible neighbors they should stop this strategy of blame game.

Positive Results of Talks

During Musharraf period a number of positive CBMs were adopted, for instance the “Ceasefire Agreement; ‘Bus service agreements for three routes between Lahore-Delhi, Srinagar-Muzaffarabad and from Lahore-Amritsar, railroad joins set up, air flights agreement, recurrence of Muzaffarabad to Srinagar bus administration was improved from fortnightly to week by week, truck routes-were unlocked crosswise over Wagah to Attari Border, prior warning of Ballistic Missile Tests, correspondence joins between Pakistan's Maritime Security’.⁴⁶ However, squabble determination endeavors have confronted abundant stalemates. A few rounds of discussions were held on different issues including the Kashmir, Siachin and Sir Creek but there has been no long term outcome of these peace talks.

Conclusions/ Recommendations

History of people has proven time and again that when people of one certain region decide to get self-determination, they cannot be deprived for a longer period. The Kashmir issue must be resolved before it resulted in a bigger bloodbath, as it has already been going on since 1991. If India honors the Security Council resolution and grants self-determination to the Kashmiris, not only it can be strong candidate for the membership of Security Council but India and Pakistan can truly come closer. Besides, water issues are also connected with the Kashmir Issue. Once it is solved, other issues automatically will, most likely, be solved as well.

According to the wheelers and dealers of the international politics, China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) is called a game-changer because it will not only bring economic prosperity in Pakistan but wrongly felt by India that it may alter the balance of power in the region and may be in the world. US had intended to quit Afghanistan by 2012 through phased withdrawal but now it seems that they are having a second thought after this development. Its sudden friendly ties with Iran seems to be a U-Turn and open support to build India’s atomic advancement by promising to grant the membership of Nuclear club, and offering a seat in the UN Security Council and encouraging construction of Chabahar Port in Iran are steps which may alter the course of history not only of India-Pakistan relations

which will become more hostile but also the emergence of new alignment or blocks in which both will once again find themselves in the opposite camps.

However, if the following recommendations are followed it may help India and Pakistan develop working relationship if not the ideal. The flow of events between—both the countries is always on a regular up and down curve—especially the down curve. If positive contacts are not taking place between the two, rest assured some disturbing incident(s) will definitely occur so it is very important that the two parties look beyond any negative incident(s), which won't stop, anyway. Even if there was peace between India and Pakistan, mishaps might continue to happen because of vested interests of International policy makers. In light of the fact that untoward occurrences will continue to ensue, various-factors should be considered by both the countries to ever make progress. Since hawks are working to divide both states—such incidents will continue therefore the two must be willing to look beyond them especially in good times. No incident in the past ten years, for example, has happened which could have threatened either's territorial sovereignty. So if negotiations between the two have taken a positive turn and some unfortunate incident occurs, they should not react as if either country itself could have been destroyed or even damaged in any sense. Only this feeling can result in long-term positive relations otherwise if contacts are terminated at every negative incident then no power on earth can make these two countries good neighbors benefitting their population.

On the basis of detailed research and serious analysis of the current situation of India and Pakistan, the author proposes following recommendations for a peaceful coexistence:

1. Both the countries should not be hostage to the colonial and postcolonial legacies in moving forward towards closer relations.
2. Although other territorial and water disputes should be resolved but Kashmir Issue is the bone of contention, which needs to be addressed sooner than later because it has caused three wars.
3. The wars of the world have unquestionably proved that all disputes are eventually solved through negotiations and not on the battleground.
4. Non-interference should be the cardinal principle between the two. Both should accept the fact they are slaves of geography and have to live with each other because the alternate is endless hostility, destruction, slavery to foreign powers and hundreds of millions permanently caught up in the poverty trap. And with the water scarcity and climate change those hundreds of millions are not going to sit still in either country. So it is better to solve one's own problems rather than continuously causing troubles for each other, which are not going to solve anything anyway, rather intensifying them.
5. If bilateral dialogues do not bring results, one should opt for third party mediation, UN Security Council resolution must be respected.
6. Track two or multilateral dialogues should be applied.

7. Pakistan and India should focus more on bilateral socio-cultural and trade links.
8. Both sides must deal with the water problem and also support more people to people contact across the LoC in Kashmir
9. Indian side should not pay notice to those discussing about a restricted war, surgical airstrikes or Cold Start.
10. Dialogues or backdoor diplomacy must be active.

In short, these are some of the basic recommendations that can lay the foundation for secure, stable and peaceful conditions in the Subcontinent, which can lead to a more tranquil world. The peace and friendship among India and Pakistan can be so beneficiary for the population that has not be even imagined, in our wildest dreams. However, the peace and stability in the recent political scenario appears to be most challenging task, but, the present author is still optimist for better future of South Asia if above-mentioned principles of co-existence are accepted and incorporated in letter and spirit.

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⁴² *CNN*, September 18, 2016. <http://edition.cnn.com/2016/09/18/asia/india-kashmir-attack/>

⁴³ In Pakistan it is perceived that "Security experts and analysts believe that no person in his right mind could buy this proposition. India has erected a barrier on the Line of Control (LoC) that consists of double-row fencing and concertina wire, which is 8-12 feet in height, is electrified and connected to a network of motion sensors, thermal imaging, lighting systems and alarms. They believe it is simply impossible for anybody to cross the LoC to carry out such an attack. As pointed out by the ISPR, there are watertight arrangements in place on both sides of the LoC and the Working Boundary, which make it impossible for anybody to infiltrate from either side. Pakistan is strictly abiding by its policy to not allow any infiltration from its soil." <http://dailytimes.com.pk/opinion/23-Sep-16/the-uri-incident-the-permeating-view>

⁴⁴ It was claimed that "on January 02, 2016 Indian Air Force base was attacked by terrorists which were accused by India as members of Jaish-e-Mohammad." *India Today*, New Delhi, March 21, 2016; <http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/pathankot-attack-probe-ia-releases-photographs-of-jaish-terrorists/1/624886.html>

⁴⁵ *Dawn*, September 5, 2016 <http://www.dawn.com/news/1300452>

⁴⁶ Dr. Smruti S. Pattanaik Dr. Arpita Anant, "Cross-LoC Confidence Building Measures between India and Pakistan: A Giant Leap or a Small Step towards Peace?" *Institute for Defence Studies and Analyses. Issue Brief*, 4-5. <http://www.idsa.in/system/files/CrossLoCCBMbetweenIndiaandPakistan.pdf>