

REGIONAL CONFLICTS AND CO-OPERATION IN SOUTH ASIA: A STUDY OF INDO-PAK RELATIONS

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ABSTRACT: No intelligent observer of south-Asia can escape the logic of regional cooperation. Between the idea and the reality, however, falls the shadow of problem, which is both conceptual and practical. These often obscure such elements of regional cooperation as already exist and inhibit efforts to strengthen them or launch new ones.

INTRODUCTION: Before the pros and cons of regional conflict and co-operation in south Asia are argued there must be agreement on what the term means. Region has geographical as well as political connotations. A region is something more than a country and less than a continent. It is an appropriate half way house for a time when the viability of single nation is in doubt but the world is not yet ready for unity. A region assumes proximity and some common historical experiences on which similar perceptions of the world and developmental strategies might be based. The countries lying south of the Himalayas and Hindu Kush mountains and bounded by the Indian ocean on three sides constitute a distinct region well recognized as south Asia. Though the precise mix varies among individual states, they share more features of climate, race, religion, history and technology with each other than any other part of the world nonetheless India and each of its neighbors cannot escape the facts which make them collectively region.

India is placed in south Asia geographical region. The countries included in this region are Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka also known as India's neighbourhood. All these nations share more or less a common heritage with some degree of common ethnic, linguistic, cultural, social and historical bounds. Historically from the earliest times they have been linked by race, culture and religion. Geographically they are proximate states

sharing strong links. India by virtue of its geographically areas and economic and military development occupies the central position in the region as a consequence of geography and history all countries are connected with India. Indian society is vast and heterogeneous. The ethnic and religious groups of south Asian countries have a place in India too. Social organization and style of managing and environment are similar between the south Asian countries and its nearest equivalent in India e.g. the people of west Bengal and Bangladesh or Tamil Nadu and Sri Lanka. This intermingling of the people culture and region imparts a familial quality to interstate relation in South Asia. In terms of socio-cultural linkages quite a number of common languages are spoken or understood in more than one country. Even in terms of common religions with the exception of India every one of the nations has adopted, Islam or Buddhism as a state religion, but one often finds a sizeable section of their population belonging to other faiths, languages and religion very often cross international boundaries in south Asia. Economically the region had a complimentary economic system before the advent of independence. Thus, ethnic and cultural links between India and its neighbours blurs the distinction between foreign and domestic politics and interstate relations tend to be under constant strain as India is not illustrated from her neighbours.

Moreover, problems of national identity are a matter of great sensitivity to south Asia countries. Fear of cultural dominations exists surfacing more in the states that have been part of India or which lack institutions of parliamentary democracy and progress found in India.

India constitutes the core and the rest of the nations belong to the periphery. India by its size, population, natural resources occupies this position however Pakistan through it has not demanded such a core status, itself has always sought for an equal status with India. The peripheral powers are the smaller nations thus surrounded India; South Asia excluding the India has two types of powers. Pakistan one major power which attempt at limiting India aspiration of leadership in region. Pakistan's limitations come from its geography, it is on the periphery of south Asia. Birth of Pakistan in bitterness

and bloodshed over India's partition, along with the three wars has left too much mistrust and fear between India and Pakistan to not be easily eradicated. There also remains the difference of concept between secular and Islamic states, which became concretized in disputes over territory or citizenship between India on one hand and Pakistan or Bangladesh on the other. Economically and Militarily it has not been able to out shadow India. India's economy is at a higher stage and growing more rapidly than those of its neighbors. Pakistan is a complex mix of national prejudice in-flatted psyche, injured ego plain rivalry, rooted in history of partition, along with problem of identity and integration.

Independence set Pakistan and India in opposite directions. If India wanted non-alignment Pakistan followed alignment. India's purpose was to minimize foreign intervention. Pakistan opted for maximizing foreign intervention.

The history of Indo-Pakistan relations has been mainly a story of conflict and discord, mutual distrust and suspicion. It has resulted from a number of intricate factors like legacy, the difference in religion and race, conflicting national interest and ideologies, power struggle between the two countries, the role they have played in international politics and various territorial disputes including Kashmir. In other words, the Indo-Pakistan relations have been influenced, perhaps bedeviled, by questions at issue going back to the pre-partition days, emerging from the partition and arising after the partition. They were also influenced by external factors. The major factor however, has been the perception of each other and of themselves. Most of the problems has arisen out of the perceptual, divergence. However 'Lahore Declaration' was a marked change in the way each has looked at the other and the way have perceived themselves.

The brief December 1971 war between the two countries had for reaching consequences for the Indian subcontinent, it changes the power structure of the sub-continent, pricked the bubbles of the two-nations theory and put Indo- Pakistan relations in a new perspective.

The two world power U.S.S.R. and U.S.A. played a significant role in Indo-Pakistan relations. Moreover, the two countries have never perceived the other acting alone. Pakistan's counting of the United States was quickly matched by India's association with the soviet Union. Sino-Indian hostility gave greater credence to a New Delhi-Moscow network, it also brought Beijing into intimate relations with Islamabad. In the last forty years, however, India's Moscow connection has proved far more significant than those Pakistan has sustained with the Washington or Beijing. Soviet Military assistance to India assured New Delhi that the military balance between it and Islamabad would remain in its favour. On the other hand US exploited the Pakistan fears, to maintain their hold by providing Pakistan arms and aid which gives it a false sense of strength, due to which it desists from solving bilateral issues. After the end of the cold war, through the US policy in the region underwent a slight change but still Pakistan could not be dropped due to its historical ties of alliances with the USA all along India has reacted bitterly against the US policy of providing arms to Pakistan but to no avail. The basis of the US Arms supply to Pakistan is not that the US has any special linking for Pakistan but that it has been working in its global interests and Pakistan seemed to serve the US interest well. The US administration has declared Pakistan as a frontline state. In spite of the Indian opposition on the basis that the arms provided to Pakistan would be used against India. Another reason was that it led to an arms race in the sub continent and prevented normalization of Indo-Pak relations because it gave Pakistan a false sense of strength making her aggressive and bellicose. The US decisions to provide arms to Pakistan in the wake of Afghan crisis the caused dismay and anguish in India, for the US military aid to Pakistan against India would force the soviet union to enter into the fray for helping India. In mid-eighty's.

Ton of arms and ammunition imported during the former soviet Occupation remained in Afghanistan and Pakistan. These weapons included sophisticated man-portable surface-to air missiles(SAMS'S) powerful machine guns, rocket launchers, grenades and explosives that drastically altered the security environment in the whole of central and south-Asia.

This policy and strategy of Pakistan has a direct bearing on India, particularly in its border states of Punjab and Jammu and Kashmir. Pakistan sponsored a proxy war in these states. A relative peace has been resorted in Punjab, but Jammu and Kashmir is still experiencing worst kind of terrorism and violence since 1989. Islamabad has used its relationship with Taliban government in Afghanistan to set up camps for Kashmiri terrorist. Moreover, a large number of Afghani Mujahideen has been smuggled into Kashmir to disrupt the normal life and destroy the Kashmiri identity and culture. Attacks have been made on innocent people including women and children minorities, school buildings educational institutions and state legislature, besides the security forces. India has accused Pakistan of arming and training Islamic insurgents, Islamabad denies the charges, saying it only extends moral and diplomatic support to Kashmir's struggle for self-determination. In fact, it is the extremist network in Afghanistan that has helped Pakistan with plausible deniability in the recent years.

Once again, relations of both the countries went to worsen when India conducted her second nuclear tests at 'Pokhran' in Rajasthan on May 11 and 13, 1998 and Pakistan conducted a series of nuclear tests at 'Chagai hills' on 28 May and 30, 1998. These tests have established that India has approved capability for a weaponized nuclear programme.

In February, 1999, on Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's invitation. Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee and entourage traveled by bus (called Bus Diplomacy) to Lahore. Pakistan although the two leaders did not achieve any dramatic breakthrough on the contentious issue of Kashmir, however, they issued the 'Lahore Declaration' backed up by a clearly spelled out 'Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)

After three months of the Lahore Declaration a limited conventional war broke out between India and Pakistan in the Kargil sector. In the preceding winter months, Pakistan army personnel dressed as Jihadi militants, infiltrated through gaps between Indian defences. Then once again both the countries confronted on 'Kargil War'. India launched "Operation Vijay"

a combined effort of India army and Air Force, took two months to flush out the intruders or Pakistan army. The Pakistani army was forced to step out due to a worldwide condemnation of Pakistan's diabolic role in kargil, thus kargil war was won by India both 'diplomatically and militarily'. In 1999, Pervez Musharraf, chief of military led the fourth military cop in Pakistan and become the ruler of the state. After that Agra Summit was held between India and Pakistan for the solution of problems and creation of enduring friendship but Musharraf remained adamant on the point that 'Kashmir problem was the core issue between Indo-Pak talk and cooperation on other issues was not possible until the solution of Kashmir problem. Thus leading of failure the 'Agra-Summit'.

The five major terrorist attacks have taken place in India. First attack on the legislative Assembly of J&K on 01 Oct 2001. The second was the attack on the Indian parliament on 13 Dec. 2001. The Third as the attack on the American center in Calcutta. On 22 Jan 2002 and the fourth was the attack on an army camp at Kalu chack on 12 May 2002 and the fifth was 2008 Mumbai attacks(also referred to as 26/11) Taj Mahal Place Hotel was specifically chosen by Lakhkar-e-Taiba for an attack so that it will be "striking a blow against a symbol of Indian wealth and progress. All of the above diabolical activities created war like situation between the border states. During this stained situation, all the diplomatic relations and contacts such as; bus service, Air link and communication service between the two countries, were interrupted. The situation changed dramatically after the Mumbai attack pressure that Indian brought on Pakistan changed the dynamic of power play in south Asia and made it one the most volatile regions of the world. The two nuclear neighbors were engaged in an eyeball-to-eyeball confrontation for long time and situation is still the same.

But the two countries should realize that the boundaries drawn at the time of partition were unnatural to the extent that they cut the traditional cultures and trade roots. Thus their interest lies in forging closer ties rather than in adopting conflicting postures. Both countries must break from the past for the sake of the future. They should coordinate their national interest by

developing a positive approach as was done by France and Germany, who realized that it was impossible for each side to get the better of the other and they would benefit by co-operation rather than conflict.

COCLUSION: Therefore, the two countries must reconcile their stands by focusing on the social, cultural and economic factors. This will help in building up trust, which is the major obstacle and which has provided an opportunity to the global and regional forces to exploit the tensions in the region. Faith in each other will get the peace process moving and his will be the time to tackle their confliction issues. Their will be resolve-these issues will grow and being around with be viewed in their mutual interest. By preparing for the resolution exercise and being around with option and the will and commitment to resolution, issue will not be, insurmountable in the light of common interests rather the formation of confederation could be an answer to the outstanding issue. This could be achieved in the distant future, once distrust is overcome and convergence of interest is achieved through the process of conflict resolution.

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