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**Peace Between India and Pakistan :
Whither Myth Or Reality**

REKHA BORTHAKUR



Banikanta Kakati Research Institute
Krishna Kanta Handiqui State Open University
Guwahati • Assam

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Peace Between India and Pakistan: Myth or Reality
by Rekha Borthakur

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PEACE BETWEEN INDIA AND PAKISTAN: MYTH OR REALITY

Abstract

India and Pakistan were born in mid-August 1947 as decolonised nations. Both did come into armed conflict soon after leading to a visible impact on their mutual relationship. The threat of war looms large over their continuing disputes on several issues, more particularly on Kashmir and proxy war. Both the countries have fought three wars, in addition to the Kargil skirmishes of 1999. While it is unthinkable of a full-blown war, peace in the Sub-continent remains elusive. All publicised efforts by the two countries aimed at finding out a modus vivendi have remained elusive. The present paper attempts to analyse that the India-Pakistan peace process that had started at the turn of the 21st century, at times halted as a result of cross-border terrorism with least possibility of improving the ties between the two nuclear neighbours.

Keywords

Kashmir, conflict, cross-border terrorism, the peace process, summit, dialogue.

Introduction:

India and Pakistan were born in mid-August 1947 as decolonised nations.¹ The process of partition and independence was severely challenged between 1947-49 by communal rioting and the invasion of Kashmir.² Their birth was accompanied by a communal holocaust with some 800,000 casualties.³ This general picture of separation in distress and final divorce in anger left unhappy memories and feelings of disagreement and antagonism which was one of the founding stones in the long-lasting conflict between the two countries.⁴

India and Pakistan have never had a mutual relationship that could be regarded as friendly. They have fought four wars including the Kargil war and numerous border skirmishes. Some of these border skirmishes lasted for days, even weeks and were about to develop into full-blown wars. All publicised efforts by the two countries aimed at finding out a

modus vivendi have remained elusive. Since independence, the relations between India and Pakistan remain highly volatile and conflict-prone.⁵

1947-48 Indo-Pak Conflict

The origins of the Indo-Pakistan conflict over the disputed territory of Jammu and Kashmir are complex, rooted in the process of British colonial withdrawal from the subcontinent.⁶ The British government gave 565 princely states under its suzerainty the option of joining either India or Pakistan, Kashmir, however, was unique in its complexities, It was Muslim dominated, yet ruled by a Hindu King, Maharaja Hari Singh.⁷ Both India and Pakistan, for markedly different reasons, sought to incorporate Kashmir into their emergent domains. For India, incorporating Kashmir was important because possessing Kashmir, a Muslim-majority state, would demonstrate India's fundamental commitment to civic, secular nationalism and that a Muslim-majority state could thrive within a secular polity.⁸ For Pakistan, envisioned and created as a homeland for the Muslims of South Asia, the possession of Kashmir was equally significant. Pakistani decision-makers believed that Pakistan's identity would remain incomplete without the incorporation of Kashmir.⁹

The Hindu monarch of Jammu and Kashmir, Maharaja Hari Singh, was originally interested in an independent state and signed a standstill agreement with Pakistan.¹⁰ But Pakistan was desperate to consolidate its identity by incorporating the state. Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Governor General of Pakistan, ordered an economic blockade in August 1947, to force Kashmir to fall in line. Following the failure of the move, on October 22, 1947 fully armed tribesmen from the North West Frontier Province of Pakistan and other Pakistani nationals entered Muzaffarabad (now capital of their version of 'Azad Kashmir' and India's terminology of 'Occupied Kashmir') with modern weapons, under the command of trained generals, in buses and trucks, and on foot, went of rampage with acts of arson, pillage and plunder inside Kashmir.¹¹ With the invading and pillaging forces threatening to enter Srinagar, Maharaja Hari Singh was compelled to solicit Indian support. However, India was unwilling to intervene in the internal affairs of Jammu & Kashmir as long as it did not accede to India.¹² On October 26, once the Maharaja had signed the Instrument of Accession and Abdullah granted his approval, Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru instructed Indian troops to be airlifted into Kashmir.¹³

India met the Pakistani threat on the Kashmir Valley by the ad hoc application of available military force, but was not enough to stop Pakistan from occupying large chunks of territory to the North of Leh, in the Jammu & Kashmir Province of India.¹⁴ On January 1, 1948 India referred the dispute to the UN Security Council, where a new battlefield opened up.¹⁵ At that point of time, India had virtually little space to manoeuvre with its dominion status and weak military and administrative-cum-political infrastructure the British General and the last Viceroy. It is noteworthy that Pakistan reply to Indian complaint of dated January 15, 1948 and its plea to extend the debates in the Security Council on all disputes, and not merely the Kashmir alone, and eventually its decision not to honour the resolution of the United to vacate the occupied territories are the historic facts of the bitter relationship between two countries.¹⁶

The initial presentations by both India and Pakistan made it abundantly clear that the two countries differed regarding the resolution of the dispute. From the Indian viewpoint, the first condition for restoration of normalcy, on which depended the possibility of holding a plebiscite, was the withdrawal of invasion. From Pakistan's viewpoint, the necessity was of getting Kashmir back to the pre-accession situation and asking some international authority - the UN or the Commonwealth - to organise the plebiscite.¹⁷

On April 21, 1948, UN Commission for India and Pakistan passed a resolution, which envisaged that a free and fair plebiscite be held to determine the wishes of Kashmiris about accession to either India or Pakistan.¹⁸ The proposed plebiscite, however, was not held as Pakistan and India could never agree on how and under what circumstances a free and fair plebiscite could take place.¹⁹ The inability of the two countries to work out any resolution on the core issue of Kashmir set the stage for another war between them in 1965.

1965 Indo-Pak War

India and Pakistan fought their second open war over Kashmir in September 1965. The action of second Indo-Pak War began in August 1965, when Pakistan sent large teams of trained guerrillas to instigate an uprising in the Kashmir Valley.²⁰ The infiltration started across the 470 miles long Cease Fire Line (CFL) in Kashmir around August 5, 1965. The insurgents were dressed as local inhabitants and carried mostly small arms, grenades, plastic explosives, and radio equipment.²¹

India contended that 3,000 invaders had crossed the cease-fire line by August 9 and that another 2,000 infiltrated later. But these limited forces could obviously not hope to defeat the 150,000 strong Indian armies in Kashmir. The Pakistani plan was therefore probably to support the anti-Indian elements among the Kashmiri to promote open revolt in the valley and conquer strategic places (airfield, radio station, etc.) to establish a pro-Pakistani regime.²² The intruders' grand hope of linking up with the disaffected population of Kashmir and quickly fomenting a rebellion, however, failed to materialise. The native Kashmiris quickly alerted the local authorities about the infiltration that was taking place along the CFL. The Indian authorities moved with dispatch to seal the border and started vigorously to hunt down those infiltrators who had already penetrated the valley.²³

The 1965 Indo-Pak war was bitter, brief, and more or less a stalemate. Both India and Pakistan were under intense pressure from the US and the UK to terminate the conflict. Both the US and the USSR acted with common purpose inside and outside the UN to end hostilities on the subcontinent.²⁴ Meanwhile, hectic efforts were made by the UN Secretary-General and the Security Council to arrange a ceasefire; and on September 20, 1965, the Security Council passed a resolution demanding a ceasefire. India promptly accepted the UN Security Council cease-fire resolution on September 21 and Pakistan announced at midnight on September 22, its acceptance of the ceasefire proposal.²⁵ Thus the India-Pakistan war of 1965 ended in UN-mediated cease-fire with no territorial gain for either side.²⁶

In the post-1965 period, the US government showed little interest in promoting peace between the two adversaries. The Soviet government took the initiative in mediating peace with the tacit approval of the Johnson administration which was fully occupied with Vietnam at that time and had lost leverage in both New Delhi and Islamabad. The result of Soviet Premier Alexei Kosygin's good office was the Tashkent Declaration of January 10, 1966. It was not a peace treaty because neither side comprised its position on Kashmir or any other issue.²⁷ Under the terms of the Tashkent Agreement the two countries declared that all armed personnel of the two countries should be withdrawn not later than February 25, 1966, to positions they held prior to August 5, 1965, and both sides should observe the ceasefire, make efforts to end hostile propaganda, restore diplomatic relations and consider measures to restore trade and cultural relations. Both India and Pakistan also

reaffirmed their obligations under the Charter not to have recourse to force and to settle their disputes through peaceful means.²⁸

However, the spirit of Tashkent did not last long. Both parties had felt compelled to enter into the negotiations because that seemed to give them a much-needed justification for withdrawing from an untenable situation, both military and political. When the military withdrawal had been assured - and the practical organisation was rapidly carried through - the old difficulties came up again. The spirit of Tashkent evaporated in the air, and relations deteriorated again.²⁹

Effect of the 1971 Indo-Pak War on Kashmir

Unlike the two previous conflicts of 1947-48 and 1965, the 1971 War was not fought over the question of Kashmir. The roots of the war clearly went deep down to the exigencies of Pakistan's domestic politics. In the wake of the 1970 Pakistan national election, long-brewing internal turmoil between the two wings, i.e. East Pakistan and West Pakistan erupted into the open clearly revealing the failure of the power-sharing arrangements, thereby precipitating a full-scale civil war. As a result, there was a huge exodus of people from East Pakistan into the neighbouring states of India.³⁰

As the exodus grew India was able to assert with increasing conviction that, whether or not the East Pakistan crisis was an internal problem of Pakistan, it had come to have a deep impact upon India's domestic affairs.³¹ Indian policymakers, faced with this unprecedented human influx, calculated that it was cheaper to resort to war against Pakistan than to absorb the refugees into India's already turgid population.³² Although the Indian government had given moral, political and material support to the Bangladesh guerillas, the Indian armed forces refrained from crossing the border in spite of provocations from Pakistan. Indian Prime Minister, Indira Gandhi, undertook a two-week tour to the USA via the UK, France, Belgium, Austria and West Germany in the last week of September 1971 to persuade the western leaders to intervene diplomatically. While India seriously considered the military option, it also simultaneously explored the possibility of a diplomatic solution. The failure of diplomatic move necessitated a military intervention.³³ However, the open war between India and Pakistan, at last, began on the night of December 3, 1971.³⁴ It was a short war which followed, lasting only fourteen days, and thus the briefest, but also in some ways the most violent of those wars which India and Pakistan have so far fought

against each other.³⁵ In the wake of the 1971 war India emerged as the dominant power on the subcontinent. At an ideological level, Pakistan's claim to Kashmir was effectively demolished. For even at the peak of the Bangladesh crisis, the Muslim population of Kashmir showed scant interest in undermining India's war-making efforts in the western sector.³⁶ The creation of Bangladesh in 1971 witnessed the breakup of Pakistan giving rise to the possibility of settling the Kashmir issue.³⁷ The 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, however, brought a change in the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir, with India occupying 500 square miles of the Pakistani part of Kashmir and Pakistan occupying 52 square miles of the Indian part of Kashmir and that was formalised in the Simla agreement between the two countries.³⁸

The peace agreement signed at Simla afforded a chance for both countries to resolve the several contentious issues between India and Pakistan. But the LoC remains an active border, and low-intensity conflict continues as Pakistan has consistently refused to respect the LoC.³⁹

Kargil skirmish

Between early May and mid-July of 1999, India and Pakistan fought the fourth war in their independent history.⁴⁰ The conflict can be traced to the Pakistani attempt to infiltrate regular troops from the Northern Light Infantry and Kashmiri insurgents across a 150 kilometre stretch of the LoC at three points in Batalik, Dras and Kargil in the spring of 1999. The intrusion proved to be a complete surprise for Indian military and intelligence officials, who had failed to anticipate a Pakistani military incursion across a most inhospitable terrain.⁴¹

The Kargil conflict that rocked the sub-continent in the summer of 1999 was unusual in many ways: First, even though there was no formal declaration of war, the Kargil conflict proved to be among the costliest of the Indo-Pakistani war regarding both men and material.⁴² The conflict also saw the extensive use of heavy artillery at high altitudes and India resorted to the use of its air force against Pakistan for the first time since their 1971 war.⁴³ Second, it took place in a situation where both countries had nuclear weapons and were apparently ready to use them. Third, it came in the wake of the successful Lahore Summit between Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee of India and Nawaz Sharif of Pakistan. Fourth, it happened despite the two sides have maintained a modus vivendi of sorts along the Line of Control in the region. Lastly, it remained limited to a 168 km section of the line between Kaobal Gali

and Chorbat La.⁴⁴

It is noteworthy that the Kargil War exposed the Pakistan doublespeak on Kashmir and brought to light the country's involvement in fostering terrorism through active patronisation of armed Islamic separatist and militant groups. This evoked strong reactions from the international community. The US, in particular, came down heavily on Pakistan for its activities. The US appreciated India's position of restraint by not crossing the LoC despite strong provocations.⁴⁵

On July 12, 1999, Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif gave nationwide television address in which he called for the withdrawal of the mujahideen from the mountain ranges. Here it is to be noted that Sharif carefully avoided making a public statement about altering any deployments of the Pakistani army.⁴⁶ It was only in late July did Pakistani sources start admitting that their military forces had been deeply involved in the Kargil conflict. By July 14, the first set of infiltrators started to withdraw from their positions.⁴⁷ It was only towards the end of the month that the conflict finally came to a close. The lack of coordination between Pakistan's political and Military establishments in no small measure contributed to the Kargil fiasco. In May 1999 in an interview from London, the exiled former Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif disclosed that he came to know of the Kargil 'misadventure' from the then Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee who confronted him on it over the telephone in May 1999.⁴⁸

Thus, the Kashmir saga reflects an unending tale of hostility and mistrust between two nations, once a part of each other.⁴⁹

Dynamics of India-Pakistan Relationship: Post Kargil

In the aftermath of Kargil war, ties between India and Pakistan were at the lowest ebb. India took the position that it would not be possible to do business with the military dictator who had engineered the Kargil conflict.⁵⁰ It was recognised that the argument that India should not deal with a military dictator, responsible for the Kargil episode, could not be realistically sustained beyond a limited period. Requirements of Realpolitik was to deal with whatever government was ineffective power in Pakistan. It was felt that not resuming dialogue with Pakistan would only strengthen and prolong the military dictatorship in Pakistan, as the military establishment there would argue for its continuation in power to meet the political and military threat from India inherent in its rejection of dialogue.⁵¹

Agra Summit

On May 24, 2001, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee invited Pakistan's military ruler Pervez Musharraf for a summit meeting.⁵² The Indian invitation to Musharraf broke the nearly two-year political standoff that followed the Kargil skirmish.⁵³ It is noteworthy that after the Kargil War, while there was a standoff between Governments of India and Pakistan, non-governmental contacts between the two countries continued with certain active momentum. Delegations had been exchanged consisting of women's organisations, NGOs dealing with human rights and think-tanks with consistent frequency. These delegations included journalists and former diplomats who had dealt with Indo-Pakistan relations and even former military commanders, from both countries. The objectives of such interactions were to undo the damage caused by the Kargil war. It is noteworthy that these exchanges had the general endorsements of governments of both countries, even though the motivations differed and at times were contradictory with each other. The general conclusion that one draws from these developments is that there was a groundswell of opinion in both countries and also Jammu and Kashmir, to resume negotiations, however tentative and difficult they may be.⁵⁴ It was against this background that both India and Pakistan decided to renew the dialogue process at Agra in July 2001.

The Agra Summit, however, failed. The differences in the approaches of the two sides were so grave that, let alone any agreement, even the ritualistic joint declarations at its end could not be issued, and Musharraf left India a day earlier than scheduled.⁵⁵ India insisted on a comprehensive set of issues, including cross-border terrorism, opening up of trade, cultural exchanges, removal of visa restrictions, and working out nuclear risk reduction measures which in India's view was more important than the Kashmir issue. Besides, India expressed the hope that Musharraf's discussions with Vajpayee would commence a process of continuous dialogue aimed at all-round normalisation of Indo-Pakistan relations. Musharraf, on the other hand, was keen on discussing only one issue, i.e., the 'core issue' of Kashmir.⁵⁶ The Agra experience was a significant attempt by India to break the ice and once again resume talks with Pakistan on issues which continues to remain as an irritant in the Indo-Pakistan relationship.

Changing International Scenario Post-September 11, 2001

In the wake of September 11, Pakistan had to make a hard choice between supporting the fundamentalist elements that it had helped spawn in the wake of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979 and the US-led campaign against terrorism. Confronted by President George Bush's offer of a stark choice - "either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists" - as well as the private threats conveyed by US Secretary of State Colin Powell, President Pervez Musharraf opted for a 'frontline state' status for Pakistan.⁵⁷ The Government of India on its part extended unconditional support including military/logistic facilities that the US may ask for?⁵⁸ There has been intense diplomatic pressure on India and Pakistan by the international community to defuse Indo-Pakistan tensions and impelling them towards negotiating table on the Kashmir issue.⁵⁹

Various reasons prompt an international interest, particularly by the US in the status of India-Pakistan relationship. First, whatever India's conviction, the international community considers the problem of Jammu and Kashmir as a territorial dispute in which Pakistan has a status and stake. Neither the accession of the state to India nor the issue of Pakistani aggression is part of their perception. Second, despite the passage of more than 50 years, the dispute remains unresolved, and it has sparked off major conflicts between India and Pakistan. Third, the anxiety about such conflicts has qualitatively increased in the international community because of the acquisition of nuclear weapons and missiles capacities by India and Pakistan over the last decade. The Kashmir issue is perceived as a nuclear flashpoint. Fourth, the phenomenon of cross-border terrorism and pan-Islamic militancy have become a matter of international concern, and the assessment is that this pernicious phenomenon finds fertile ground in disputes like those of Jammu and Kashmir. There was also a speculative assessment that the stabilisation of Afghanistan is indirectly dependent on the resolution of Kashmir and the normalisation of India-Pakistan relations.⁶⁰

Attack on Indian Parliament

On December 13, 2001, six individuals believed to be members of the Lashkar-e-Taiba attacked the Indian Parliament building in New Delhi.⁶¹ In the ensuing exchanges, all six of the attackers were killed along with eight members of the security forces.⁶²

In the wake of the terrorist attack on the Indian Parliament backed by anti-Indian forces operating from Pakistan, the Government of India targeted a series of diplomatic and military measures against Islamabad. Some of these were further tightened following the terrorist attack on the Kaluchak Army Camp on May 14, 2002. The intent behind these measures has been widely interpreted as 'coercive diplomacy'.⁶³

India exercised certain non-military measures: the severance of rail and road links, the recall of the Indian High Commissioner and having the strength of diplomatic missions, and the denial of Indian airspace to Pakistan International Airlines. At the same time, military mobilisation was authorised, including the movement of the Army's strike elements towards the International Border (IB).⁶⁴ The Air Force was placed on full alert.⁶⁵ The Indian government launched Operation Parakram, a massive mobilisation of the armed forces of about 7,00,000 troops, along with the borders with Pakistan in full war preparedness. The forces were kept ready to launch a strike at the shortest notice. Pakistan's counter-mobilisation of its forces on the border resulted in the two armies at 'eyeball-to-eyeball' confrontation. Though war was not spelt out clearly as an option, there was an unmistakable indication that direct military action could be launched to destroy the infrastructure of terrorism in Pakistan, if it did not stop training, aiding and abetting terrorist groups.⁶⁶

Despite CBMs, this was the lowest point in India-Pakistan relationship. The military establishment of both the countries faced each other for nine months with the nuclear threat looming large in the background. However, towards mid-October 2002, the Government of India decided to de-escalate partially by withdrawing troops from the International Border. The idea was to ease tensions and explore other possibilities.

Resumption of India-Pakistan Peace Process in 2003

On April 18, 2003, Indian Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee while addressing a rally in Srinagar, made a call for a fresh peace process between Indian and Pakistan, that had come to an absolute standstill after the attack on the Indian Parliament on December 2001. Vajpayee's peace initiative was followed by Pakistan Prime Minister, Mir Zafarrullah Khan Jamali, who surprised his critics in both the countries, by calling up Vajpayee over the phone, welcoming the offer and expressing hope of turnaround in bilateral relationship.⁶⁷

On October 22, 2003, India made 12 point CBM proposal to Pakistan, which read as follows:

- restoration of cricketing and other sporting links;
- launching of a bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad in Pakistan occupied Kashmir;
- holding of the second round of talks for the restoration of air links and overflights;
- resumption of rail links after aviation talks and increasing the capacity of Delhi-Lahore bus service;
- setting up of links between the Coast Guards of the two countries on the pattern of Directors General of Military Operations;
- putting an end to arrest of fishermen within certain specific areas in the Arabian sea;
- visas facilities in cities other than New Delhi and Islamabad;
- permission to citizens above 65 years to cross Wagah border on foot;
- launching of ferry service between Mumbai and Karachi;
- bus or rail link between Khokrapar in Rajasthan and Munnabao in Pakistan's Sindh province;
- re-medical treatment for 20 more ailing Pakistani children in India; and
- mutual increase in the staff strength of respective High Commissions in Delhi and Islamabad.⁶⁸

On October 29, 2003, Pakistan accepted many of these 12 CBMs proposed by India. Pakistan also made some fresh proposals. It will:

- offer 100 scholarships to Kashmiris children to take graduation and post-graduation course in Pakistan;
- extend treatment to aged Kashmiris.
- help widows and victims of rape (which, Pakistan's Foreign Secretary Riaz Khokar alleged occurred due to the action of security forces).
- request UN agencies to identify such people.⁶⁹

On January 1, 2004, India and Pakistan exchanged lists of their nuclear installations and facilities as stipulated under the 1988 Agreement on the Prohibition of Attack Against Nuclear Installations and Facilities. It is noteworthy that even at the height of tensions at the end of 2001, both India and Pakistan exchanged information on nuclear installations and demonstrated their commitment against attacking each other's nuclear installations much to the relief of the rest of the world.⁷⁰

The Islamabad Summit

On January 2004, India and Pakistan used the opportunity of the SAARC summit at Islamabad to resume top-level contacts and further the process of confidence building.⁷¹ Both Vajpayee and Musharraf agreed that high-level political contacts would be sustained regardless of the ups and downs that occurred in Indo-Pak relations.⁷² While the Indian side expressed its willingness to discuss issues related to Jammu and Kashmir, the 'Kashmir-first approach' was not emphasized much by Pakistan, which showed greater sensitivity to the composite dialogue process. Besides, while noting that the people of Kashmir must be involved in finding a solution to their problems in some form at some stage in the peace process, the President of Pakistan reassured that he would not permit any territory under Pakistan's control to be used for terrorism in any manner. Pakistan also adopted the Protocol on Terrorism along with other SAARC states at the Islamabad meeting. The protocol voices concerns about the debilitating threat of terrorism, in all its forms and manifestations, to the South Asian region, and reaffirms the commitment of the member countries to implement the SAARC convention on the suppression of terrorism as well as other international conventions to which the members are parties.⁷³ The results of the summit meeting between Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee and Pakistan President Musharraf on the sidelines of the SAARC Summit went beyond what was expected. Not only were some significant decisions taken to move forward in the process of normalisation but a roadmap for further interaction was clearly stated at the end of the visit.⁷⁴

In May 2004, there was a change of Government in India. NDA (National Democratic Alliance) government was replaced by United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government, led by Manmohan Singh. It is noteworthy that Prime Minister Manmohan Singh too took concrete steps to take the peace process initiated by his predecessor forward with equal zeal.

Talks continued to take place at fixed intervals.

As a result of the ongoing peace process, a series of development took place between India and Pakistan during July 2003 to November 2006. These governmental initiatives have gone a long way in easing tensions between the two nations. The important initiatives taken towards this end has been summed below :

- On July 3, 2003, a group of 58 members Pakistani business delegation came to India.
- On July 11, 2003, the Delhi-Lahore bus service was started after 18 months.
- On January 15, 2004. India and Pakistan resumed the 'Samjhauta Express' the rail-links between Lahore and Amritsar, which had been suspended following the December 13, 2001, attack on Indian Parliament.
- On March-April 2004, Indian Cricket team travelled to Pakistan for a historic cricket series since 1989.
- On May 3, 2004, both India and Pakistan reached an agreement to revive trade in Kashmir.
- On July 2004, a group of 15 members from Pakistan, particularly three from Pakistan occupied Kashmir (PoK) took part in the 12th SAARC Integration camp at Gulmarg in Jammu & Kashmir.
- On September 19, 2004, India announced the easing of visa rules for the visiting Pakistani journalist, doctors and academics. In the same year, 4000 Indian Sikh pilgrims arrived for a visit to the religious sites in Pakistan.
- On the first week of October 2004, a 16 member delegation of Pakistani journalist visited Jammu & Kashmir. The delegation was led by South Asian Free Media Association (SAFMA) general secretary, Imtiaz Alam.
- On December 16, 2004, the first ever India, Pakistan, Information and Technology (IT) Summit took place in Islamabad where the National Association of Software and Service Companies (Nasscom) a delegation of 20 IT companies to Islamabad.
- On March 21, 2005, 92 member delegations from Pakistan joined the re-enactment of the Dandi March organised by the All-India

Congress Committee to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the historic yatra led by Mahatma Gandhi. The Pakistanis, who included a number of volunteers of 'Khudai Khidmadgar', the organisation of the Mahatma's close associate Badshah Khan, more popularly known as Frontier Gandhi.

- On April 7, 2005, the first bus service from Srinagar to Muzaffarabad was flagged off.
- On the second week of January 2006, Indian Cricket team visited Pakistan for a cricket series between the two countries.
- On January 20, 2006, the first Lahore-Amritsar bus 'Dosti' rolled in at Wagah.
- On February 16, 2006. India and Pakistan started 'Thar Express', the rail links between Munnabao in Rajasthan and Khokrapar in Sindh.
- On March 24, 2006, the Amritsar - Nankana Bus Service was started.
- On May 7, 2006, Indo-Pak night bus service from Ferozepur and Fazilka to Ludhiana and Chandigarh was resumed.
- On June 1, 2006, both the countries agreed to host festivals displaying each other movies.
- On June 20, 2006, the Poonch-Rawalkot bus service was inaugurated.

On September 16, 2006, the agreement on a joint anti-terror mechanism between Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf took place in Havana on the sides of the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) summit. It was a new development in India-Pakistan relations and helped the two countries move forward with the resumption of their dialogue that came to a halt after the Mumbai blasts of July 2006. Havana talks assumed significance mainly because it was the first high-level interaction between India and Pakistan after the Mumbai blasts of July 2006 which had resulted in the suspension of the Indo-Pakistan Foreign Secretary-level talks. The two leaders decided to put in place an India-Pakistan anti-terrorism institutional mechanism to identify and implement counter-terrorism initiatives and investigations.⁷⁵

On November 26, 2008, shooters opened fire on civilians at several sites in Mumbai, India. More than 160 people are killed in the attacks. Ajmal Kasab, the only attacker captured alive, says the attackers were

members of Lashkar-e-Taiba. In the wake of the attacks, India breaks off talks with Pakistan.⁷⁶

On July 2009, Pakistan Prime Minister Yousuf Raza Gilani and India Prime Minister Manmohan Singh met on the sidelines of Non-Alignment Movement (NAM) Summit in Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt, issuing a joint statement charting future talks. However, Manmohan Singh ruled out the resumption of the Composite Dialogue Process.⁷⁷

On February 2010, India and Pakistan's foreign secretaries met in New Delhi for talks. At the talks, India raised concerns over continued terrorism emanating from Pakistan. After the Mumbai attack on 2008, foreign secretaries of the two countries have been meeting on the sidelines of various multi-lateral events. The last formal meeting between the Foreign Secretary was held in May 2008. However, India made it clear that the foreign secretary-level talks did not mean resumption of Composite Dialogue, which was put on hold by India after the 2008 Mumbai attack carried out by ten Pakistani nationals.⁷⁸

On September 2013, Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and Pakistan's Nawaz Sharif met in New York on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly. Indian Prime Minister raised the issue of terrorism emanating from Pakistan and reiterated the need for effective action against perpetrators of the Mumbai attacks.⁷⁹ Both the leaders agree to reduce violence over their disputed border in Kashmir.⁸⁰

Indo-Pak ties Since 2014: Elements of continuity and change

In 2014, when the BJP government under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi assumed office, there was an expectation that India's Pakistan policy would undergo a complete overhaul.⁸¹ Narendra Modi took an initiative to maintain cordial relationship between India and Pakistan by inviting SAARC heads including Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, for his swearing ceremony. The symbolism of the shawl and Sari that were exchanged between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Narendra Modi (for the former's wife and the latter's mother) garnered much attention in the media and raised hopes of a new beginning in Indo-Pak relations.⁸² But the tide began to turn in the summer. Pakistan violated the ceasefire. There was heavy cross-border firing across the LoC between India and Pakistan. The LoC firing was followed by India's calling off Foreign Secretary-level talks scheduled to be held in Islamabad on August 2014 after Pakistan held its routine talks with Kashmiri separatist leaders in Delhi.⁸³ It is noteworthy that

the Foreign Secretary-level talks had been proposed by India to revive the stalled bilateral dialogue between India and Pakistan. At the 18th SAARC Summit in Kathmandu in November 2014, India and Pakistan were the only countries not to hold bilateral meetings.⁸⁴

In July 2015, the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan met in the Russian city of Ufa on the sidelines of the Shanghai Cooperation Organisation Summit. The meeting focused on terrorism and security issues, laying down a structure of talks between the National Security Advisers (NSA) of the two countries “to discuss all issues connected to terrorism”, to be followed by the meeting of the two countries border management forces and then of the Director General of Ministry Operations. It was also agreed that the two sides would “expedite the Mumbai case trial, including additional information, such as providing voice samples “that were long pending on the Pakistani side.”⁸⁵ Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif invited Prime Minister Modi to visit Pakistan for the SAARC Summit in 2016 Prime Minister Modi accepted the visit.⁸⁶ Soon after reaching Islamabad after the Ufa talks, under the army’s pressures, Sartaz Aziz, Adviser to Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif on Foreign and Security Affairs assured an agitated media that Kashmir would be discussed at the proposed NSA level talks. It virtually killed the initiative for talks. Also, following this, the India-Pakistan border witnessed a sudden spurt in ceasefire violations from Pakistan (91 Violations since Ufa talks), and several terrorist attacks took place in India, major ones being in Gurdaspur in the Punjab, Udhampur in Jammu and Southern Kashmir. It was believed that the Pakistan army was possibly building pressure on India to include Kashmir in the agenda for the NSA talks. Pakistan took almost 22 days in responding to the agenda proposed by India for the NSA talks and added Kashmir to it, further stating that Aziz will talk to the Kashmiri separatist Hurriyat leaders during his visit to New Delhi for the NSA talks.⁸⁷

India refused to accept Pakistan’s demand for inclusive of Kashmir in the NSA talks’ agenda and also the meeting between the Hurriyat and the Pakistan’s NSA. Some of the Hurriyat leaders were put under house arrest and India’s Minister of External Affairs Sushma Swaraj declared in a press conference on 22 August 2015, just a day before Aziz was scheduled to travel to Delhi, that Pakistan’s insistence on changing the agenda for NSA talks was in violation of the Ufa and Shimla (1972 agreement) spirits, and if Pakistan insists on that, “there would be no talks”. In reaction, Sartaj Aziz called off his proposed visit, and the NSA

talks collapsed.⁸⁸

In November 2015, the Prime Minister of India and Pakistan had a brief meeting in Paris on the sidelines of Climate Change Summit. This was the first meeting between Modi and Nawaz Sharif since they met in Ufa in July 2015. After the meeting, they directed their foreign secretaries to initiate the process of renewal of talks, including meeting between the national security advisors of the two countries, which was cancelled on August 2015 on the issue of Pakistan seeking consultations with the Hurriyat leaders.⁸⁹

In December 2015, the National Security Advisors of India and Pakistan held a secret meeting in Bangkok and discussed a range of issues including peace and security, terrorism and Jammu and Kashmir. The Foreign Secretaries of both countries accompanied the NSA.⁹⁰

On August 2016, Union Home Minister Rajnath Singh attended the 7th SAARC Interior Ministers Conference in Islamabad. Singh's visit gave the right signal to Pakistan that in spite of the constant provocations, India would be steadfast in improving relations with the neighbouring country. Addressing the SAARC conference, without naming Pakistan but making it obvious, he called for the strongest action against nations supporting terrorism and their isolation. In his hard-hitting speech, he pointed out that mere condemnation of terrorism was not enough and there could be no good terrorists or bad terrorists, as terrorism remains the biggest challenge and threat to the region. This statement from Singh was significant as Pakistan Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had described slain Hizbul Mujahideen commander Burhan Wani as a martyr who was behind a number of terror acts in Kashmir as a freedom fighter and whose death at the hands of the Indian security forces on July 8, 2016, triggered violent protest in Kashmir Valley.⁹¹

Since 2015, the Pakistan based militants have increasingly taken to high-profile fidayeen attacks against the Indian security forces. In July 2015, three gunmen attacked a bus and police station in Gurdaspur and in January 2016 four to six gunmen attacked the Pathankot Air Force Station.⁹² On September 18, four militants attacked an Indian Army brigade headquarters in Uri, near the line of control in a pre-dawn ambush. Seventeen soldiers were killed in the militant attack. In the counteraction by the Indian Security forces, four terrorists were eliminated.⁹³ What becomes abundantly clear is that while India has been striving to establish good relations with Pakistan, incidents

of cross-border terror keep derailing the peace process. In response to the Uri attack Indian special Forces carried out surgical strikes on seven terror launch pads along the LoC in Pakistan occupied Kashmir on the intervening night of September 28 and 29, 2016. The army had said "significant casualties' were inflicted on the terrorists and their supporters in the strikes.⁹⁴

Since the Modi government took over in 2014, a series of events have had a cascading effect. The Indus water treaty often held to be the only good news between the two countries, seems to be in trouble with Prime Minister Modi saying that blood and water could not flow together after the Uri attack.⁹⁵

Conditions for enduring peace

Although there is no consensus among countries as to the broad framework within which peace process can be established, certain principles have been evolved to regulate the operations of the peace process. The efforts in this direction include:

- establishment and development of political and diplomatic relations between countries on the basis of the principles of mutual respect of sovereignty and territorial integrity, mutual non-aggression, non-interference in the internal affairs and peaceful co-existence;
- establishment and development of economic relations between countries on the basis of the principle of mutual benefit;
- search for fair and reasonable political solutions to the existing problems of the regional 'hot spots',
- credible measures to contain the tendency towards aggression against and occupation of other countries, and all forms of external expansion and hegemony;
- settlement of international disputes in a strictly peaceful manner, i.e. through negotiations and consultation;
- non-interference in the internal affairs of sovereign states. This clearly implies that no country needs to impose its social system and ideology upon other countries, much less interfere in the internal affairs and violate the sovereignty of other states under such pretexts; and
- exchange of staff and information on the political, economic, social and cultural fields, especially among those whose relations, for

whatsoever reason, are tense.⁹⁶

All the conditions mentioned above are unfortunately absent in case of India-Pakistan relationship. What becomes abundantly clear is that the history of the peace process in India-Pakistan relationships like the history of the relationship between India and Pakistan has not been smooth. There have been occasions where it has apparently seemed that the going has been smooth. But there have also been occasions where as a result of the terror and violence that has plagued the entire region, the peace process has been held to ransom. Kashmir continues to be the core issue over which both sides are deadlocked. Cross-border terrorism has emerged as a major irritant in the ties between the two countries. With both countries having entirely different perspectives on the issue of terrorism, the movement of the peace process, as well as the accompanying CBMs, have not been at the desired pace. It was believed that the peace process initiated since 2003 with people to people contact, free flow of information, economic cooperation, and use of appropriate technology to develop confidence and verification of cooperative agreements would go a long way to accomplish important breakthroughs in the normalisation of India-Pakistan relations. But while India has been continuously striving to build cordial relations with Pakistan, incidents of cross-border terrorism keep derailing the peace process. A close observation of the peace process during Vajpayee's period reveals that most of the initiatives, viz., bus diplomacy (February 1999), ceasefire during Ramzan along the LoC (November 2000), Agra Summit (July 2001), Srinagar rally speech (April 2003), were unilaterally taken by India. Pakistan had failed to reciprocate the peace initiatives taken by India. The Composite Dialogue process that had a setback after the Mumbai attacks (2008) could not be re-started to date. Moreover, a fresh series of accusations and counter-accusations started with the arrest of Kulbushan Jadhav (March 2016), whom Pakistan claims be a RAW agent and India denying the claim. The current realities affirm that peace and normalisation of relations with India do not figure in the calculations of the ruling establishment and the Pakistan army. The disqualification of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif from holding public office, by the Pakistan Supreme Court in the Panama papers case (on 29 July 2017) at a time when border tensions with India remain high, together with the civil-military imbalance in Pakistan, pose an uncertainty in the peace process between India and Pakistan. However, a series of incidents in the recent time, starting with the Mumbai attack

(that halted the process of composite dialogue) and the continued acts of terrorism from across the border over the years has necessitated the need to renegotiate Indo-Pakistan relationship with a renewed vigour. The reality of nuclear weapons has to be accepted by both the countries because wars between the two countries waged over the last few decades have failed in resolving the issues between them. Scholars, artists, social activists, media personalities and peace-loving concerned citizens of both India and Pakistan have realised the obviousness of this profound truth. They have recently started a signature campaign calling for starting and continuing the dialogue process at the formal structures of power and civil society levels towards the reduction of tension and building bridges for peace. They are convinced that seventy years of confrontation at military and political levels have done nothing good to both neighbours. On the other hand, such a belligerent situation has made the region as one of the most volatile places in the world affecting the lives of the common citizens of both the countries.

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