



Pak-India Relations And Lahore Declaration 1999

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Abstract

The relations between India and Pakistan have always been strained and troubled since their independence in August 1947. Several times the two countries have been engaged in fighting. The big cause of their troubled relations is the Kashmir dispute. Both the countries met several times for the bilateral talks to normalize the relations between them. The Lahore Declaration was one of that. This research paper is about the unpleasant relations, the big dispute of Kashmir, the Lahore Declaration and the Kargil episode between India and Pakistan. It will explain the historical background of the relations between the two neighboring countries and the causes and the proposed solutions of the Kashmir dispute. In this research study the researcher used the qualitative research design. Historical and analytical methods are used to highlight the real facts. In the present age of globalization every state is calculating and measuring everything through profit maximization and other material advantages. The relations between the immediate neighbors, Pakistan and India has been not good even from their birth till to date and the immediate cause of the sour relations is the long standing and unresolved dispute of the Kashmir. Although so many rounds of talks have been held between the two countries but fruitless. Kashmir is the nuclear flash point between the two countries, as the two states have nuclear capability. There should be good relations between the two nuclear states, it will not only better for them but very important for the region and it is possible, only when the two states become agree for the solution of the Kashmir dispute.

Keywords: Pak-India Relations, Kashmir dispute, independence, Nuclear, neighbors. Lahore Declaration, Kargil.

Introduction

Kashmir is one of the biggest unresolved disputes between Pakistan and India since the partition of the Subcontinent in 1947. The Kashmir conflict between the two countries soon raised into a full scale war, which divided the territory into two parts. Further antagonism

between the two countries destabilized the solution of Kashmir dispute. With the passage of time hostility developed between the two countries on the Kashmir Issue. (Lamb, 1991)

Different levels of talks were held and a lot of efforts were made to resolve the major dispute and to seek such solution which is acceptable to both the countries, Pakistan and India as well as to the people of Kashmir, the main victim of the dispute. The talks on the Kashmir dispute were held at different times, first under the supervision of United Nations Organization, and later at bilateral level between the leaders of Pakistan and India. But all these talks were failed to seek any solution for the dispute. After the independence a lot of developments occurred in the Subcontinent and different problems and issues aroused between the two countries. (Kux, Pakistan India Negotiations Is Past Still Prolongue?, 2007).

Bilateral Talks/Negotiations

There is a growing realization in Pakistan and India that they need to work for their bilateral relations to improve. Both the countries do not need a dialogue process just for showing to the international community. But the dialogue must aim at conflict management and resolution in a spirit of accommodation. There is a great need to show flexibility in their traditional attitudes in both the countries. (Rizvi, 2012) Pakistan and India started the dialogue process just after the partition to resolve the outstanding issues including Kashmir, the nuclear flash point and the core issue between the two countries.

Background of Lahore Declaration

In February 1997 during the election campaign, the leader of Pakistan Muslim League (N), Mian Nawaz Sharif declared that he will make the relations normal with India. He also said that flexibility will be shown in negotiations after coming in power. He said that the good relations are very important with India for the settlement of all the disputes including the Kashmir. (Aziz, 2009). Coming into power, he immediately started negotiation with India. (Thornton, 2001), and suggested India to start negotiations at foreign secretary level, which had been hindered since 1994, between the two countries. United States of America also was in fever in resumption of talks. In August 1996 the foreign secretaries of Pakistan and India Shamshad Ahmad and Salman Haider Respectively held talks in New Delhi.

On the other side on 9th April, 1997 Gohar Ayub Khan the foreign Minister of Pakistan held a breakfast session meeting with Minister of foreign affairs, Indar Kumar Gujral on the platform of Non-Alignment Movement in Delhi. Both the leaders decided to continue the process of peace talks and next talks were scheduled to be held in June 1997, in Islamabad. (Kux, US-Pakistan Relations As The Twentieth Century Ends, 2001). On May 12th 1997 Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Indian Prime Minister Indar Kumar Gujral met at SAARC at Male which was a special development in the relations of the two countries. After discussion bilateral relations, both the leaders agreed for Foreign Secretary level talks in the future. From 19 June to 23, 1997 the foreign Secretaries of the two countries met in Islamabad and discussed all issues including the Kashmir Issue. Bothe the countries agreed on Eight Point

Agenda and a mechanism, Jammu and Kashmir, Peace and security, Wullar Barrage, Siachin, Sir Creek, Commerce, Terrorism and Promotions of friendly exchange in various fields (Aziz, 2009).

The two Prime Ministers met again on September 2, 1997 on the floor of UN General Assembly. Prime Minister of Pakistan offer to India a no-war pact and eventually both the sides decided to find ways to decrease tension between the two countries. But no good results could obtain from these steps. In fact the peace process became strained when the right wing parties came to power in both countries in 1997-98. BJP in India and Pakistan Muslim League in Pakistan. But after some time the political leadership of both the countries succeeded in moving forward to make the relations normal between the two countries (Thornton, 2001)

In May 1998 Pakistan and India conducted nuclear tests which strained the relations once again between the two countries. The International Community urged the two countries to resolve their all disputes by peaceful means and avoid a nuclear conflict. In June 6, 1998 the Security Council through its Resolution No-1172 urged the two countries to remove tension and find the solution of their disputes including Kashmir (Kux, US-Pakistan Relations As The Twentieth Century Ends, 2001). On July 29-30, 1998 the SAARC was held in Colombo. The Prime Minister of Pakistan Mian Muhammad Nawaz Sharif held talks with Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee and urged him to start meaningful negotiations. "Pakistan and India should engage in a sustained dialogue. Allow me to say that Pakistan is ready for immediate resumption of bilateral foreign secretary level talks on the basis of the understanding reached between Pakistan and India on 23rd June, 1997".

The Pakistani Foreign Minister Sartaj Aziz met with Vajpayee in Durban, South Africa in August 1998 in the Summit of Non-Aligned Movement (NAM). Both the countries agreed to revive the process of composite dialogue at the foreign secretaries' level. On September 23, 1998 the formal announcement was made in this regard between the two Prime Ministers in New York. The two leaders agreed to resolve all disputes through dialogue. They agreed that the solution of Jammu and Kashmir dispute is essential for peace in the region. The meeting of Nawaz and Vajpayee and the joint statement of both the leaders give a positive boost to the bilateral relations between the two countries.

The meeting of foreign secretaries' level held from 15th to 18th October 1998 in Islamabad. In this meeting, security, peace, and Jammu & Kashmir issues were under discussion. Next round of talks was held in New Delhi in November 1998 in which the six issues were discussed. In New York Prime Ministers of both countries held a meeting, the two leaders agreed to start a bus service between New Delhi and Lahore, for the facilities of their people coming across the border. This event was of a symbolic significance. On the invitation of Nawaz Sharif, the Indian Prime Minister came to Lahore to attend the inaugural ceremony of the bus service on February 20, 1999 (Aziz, 2009).

Indo-Pak Lahore Declaration 1999

In 1998 the foreign Ministers of both the countries initiated peace process to cease the tension in the region. On September 23, 1998 both government signed an agreement recognizing the principles of building an environment of peace and security and resolving all bilateral issues, which became the bases of the Lahore Declaration. The history of bilateral talks between Pakistan and India has been damaged by tensions and the people of both the countries became victim badly because of the confrontation. The root cause of this conflict and confrontation was the unresolved issue of Jammu and Kashmir. Major challenges of peace for both the countries had given by the nuclear explosions of Pakistan and India in 1998. Fear of war was surrounding over the South Asia. The civil government of Pakistan taking major steps to start positive negotiations over all issues. From 1997 to 1999 the relations between the two countries were improved.

Lahore Declaration of 21 February 1999 signed by the Prime Minister of Pakistan and Prime Minister of India Atal Bihari Vajpayee, was one such opportunity which showed a serious obligation for all main issues through the political means between the two neighbors. This declaration was significant opportunity to both the countries to resolve their disputes and differences including Kashmir issue and to normalize the strained relations at highest political level (Ahmad S. , 2004). In March 1998, Nawaz Sharif, Prime Minister of Pakistan invited the Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee to Pakistan. From 20-21 February 1999, on the opening of the Delhi-Lahore Bus Service the Indian Prime Minister visited Pakistan. Regional cooperation within SAARC, issues of international concern and the bilateral relations were discussed between the two leaders. Eventually the Lahore Declaration along with joint-statement and Memorandum of Understanding were signed (Akhter S. , 2004)

Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee came to Pakistan in a gold colored bus on 20th February 1999. Because of that bus trip a regular bus service between Lahore and Delhi was launched. Nawaz Sharif received Vajpayee. It was a historical visit in the bilateral relations between the two countries because Vajpayee was the first Prime Minister after Rajeev Gandhi's visit in 1989 to Pakistan. The Indian Prime Minister said on the arrival at Lahore: "I have brought the good will and hope of my fellow Indians who seek abiding peace and harmony with Pakistan. I am conscious this is abiding moments in South Asian history and I hope we will be able to rise to the challenges."

Vajpayee addressed on 21st February at governor house Lahore. "We have suffered enmity for so long now is the time for friendship. I know how to win this friendship; difficult decisions would have to be made, a solution of the Kashmir problem would have to be found, but we are ready." The statement of Vajpayee showed a main shift in the Indian stand on the Kashmir issue. Nawaz Sharif also said on the occasion that both the countries would have to leave their old stances on Kashmir. The two leaders recorded their commitment to:

- 1) The two countries will resolve their disputes through the bilateral peace talks including the Kashmir dispute.

2) To make continue the Composite Dialogue Process according to the agenda.

3) Take instantaneous and tangible steps to decrease the threat of accidental use of nuclear weapons.

The foreign secretaries of both countries signed a memorandum of understanding on security and nuclear issues along with Lahore Declaration. Vajpayee went to Allama Iqbal's tomb and visited to Minaar-I-Pakistan, tomb of Ranjeet Sing. His visit to Minaar-I-Pakistan was historically symbolic and these sentiments showed that India has recognized Pakistan as an independent state. Vajpayee further said "I have said it earlier and I say it again that I and Indian people have a deep desire for peace and friendliness for Pakistani people. India and its people want to see prosperous and strong Pakistan and no one should have any doubt about this because only strong Pakistan is in the interest of India. The good beginning has been made and better results are forthcoming. We have to work together to usher in new era. A dangerous game of war and weaponry would no more be helpful in resolving the problem. A small spark can turn into a big fire destroying everything. My friends advised me not to visit Minaar-e-Pakistan because that would put my approval seal on the creation of Pakistan but, a strong and prosperous Pakistan is in our own interest". At the end of the visit "Lahore Declaration" was issued and both the countries agreed that the negotiation process will be made speedier as per the Simla Agreement and the foreign minister's level meetings will be held continuously.

The Summit Meeting

The Lahore Declaration was declared as a step forward in the bilateral relations and peace process between the two neighboring countries. After a joint press conference the Declaration was issued. The Lahore Declaration showed that there will be peace and stability between the two countries. Addressing in a joint press conference the two leaders expressed satisfaction on the beginning of bus service between Lahore and Delhi, release of civilian detainees and fishermen. They repeatedly said that the negotiations on Kashmir will be continued and the people should wait for the positive result and the indications of both the leaders will be hopefully positive. The Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif expressed his views that both the leaders are able to go ahead from the symbolism inaugural ceremony of the bus service and the two leaders held constructed and fruitful discussion. They also promised to renew the sports relations. It had been decided that the two countries would facilitate and accelerate the back channel diplomacy on the Kashmir issue. During the meeting both the leaders showed flexibility for each other and both the leaders did not show their old and strong stand about Kashmir. The two leaders agreed to stop propaganda against each other and pledged not to interfere in each other's internal affairs.

During their meetings the two leaders agreed to make such principles on which the eastern side of Chenab River, the majority areas of Hindu and Azad Kashmir would be declared part

of Pakistan and by the formula of by maximum autonomy the issue of Kashmir would be settled. This formula was presented by the Kashmir Study Group (KSG). United States of America was also advocate of the peace process under the Lahore Declaration. People of both sides pinned a lot of hopes form Lahore Declaration (Maggsi, 2013).

Analysis

The opposition parties especially the Jamat-i-Islami accused the government of a “secret deal” or “sell out” on Kashmir. On February 23 during the Senate session all the parliamentary parties including PPP welcomed the Lahore Declaration. But the views of Benazir Bhutto were quite different from the others. She gave the name of Yasir Arafat to Nawaz Sharif and blamed him for trading the Kashmir cause and Pakistani stance. Although some parties opposed this Declaration but it was an important and historical step towards normalization in the political history of the two countries. In a personal meeting both the leaders agreed to settle the Kashmir dispute this year and for this, courage and commitment was required. This declaration was a symbol of political will from both sides and showed a scene for peace in the region and a new hope of bilateral relations was created. Later in May the Kargil Crisis in 1999 and the dismissal of the civilian government in October 1999 in Pakistan sabotaged the bilateral peace talks with India and Pakistan lost an important chance to solve the old issue of Kashmir. In fact the people of both countries want peace and pleasant environment between the two hostile countries (Maggsi, 2013).

Kargil Conflict

In April, 1999 some towns of Kargil were occupied by the Kashmiri fighters backed by the Pakistani forces. This incursion spread over the area of 150 kilometers. In this invasion nearly 800 men were taking part which shocked the Indian politico-military leadership to its very foundation. (Muhammad, 2000). Indian battalions were stopped by the armed men in Ladakh and Siachen, India condemned this as the violation of the Simla Agreement and started air and army operation against the armed men and targeted the Kargil Heights and Line of Control. To calm the situation the foreign minister of Pakistan was sent to India on June, 12 for dialogue. A hostile reception was given to him. New Delhi took a rigid and non-negotiation stance and insisted on Pakistan to withdraw personnel from Kargil before any negotiations (Sattar,2013). International community also raised its concern over this issue and demanded for cooling down the issue.

Prime Minister of Pakistan met with American President, Clinton for an emergency meeting on Sunday, 4 July. After detailed discussion with Nawaz, Clinton discussed the situation with Vajpayee over the phone. President Clinton promised to take a personal interest in inspiring speedy continuation and strengthening of the bilateral efforts, once the sacredness of the Line of Control has been fully restored. Later military officers of both the countries agreed on steps for disengagement. The Pakistani armed men leave the Kargil on 16 July.

Nawaz and Clinton meeting at Washington

The President of United States Bill Clinton and Prime Minister of Pakistan Nawaz Sharif met at Washington. During the meeting Clinton stressed on the normalization of relations between the two countries. Clinton said that “the current fighting in the Kargil region of Kashmir is dangerous and contains the seed of wider conflict.” Both the leaders agreed that for the peace of South Asia and respect the Line of Control by (LoC) each country the permanent peace is very essential between the two countries and concrete steps should be taken for the restoration of the Line of Control (LoC) as per the Simla Agreement. President Clinton was advocate of the immediate end of conflict between the two countries, for this purpose the two leaders agreed for bilateral dialogue in the near future. President Clinton wished that he would take his personal interest in this regard and said that soon he would pay a visit to South Asia.

Analysis of Washington Accord

In Washington Accord it was stated that the LoC will be respected by both parties but on the other side not bounded India to full back from the areas of Siachin, Qamar, Batala and Neelam Valley to respect the Shimla Agreement. In fact this was one-sided agreement to please India and America. This is the Wonderful point that being a party of Kargil Conflict, India was not a party of the Washington Accord. Differences between political and military leadership in Pakistan could be seen during and after the Kargil episode which ultimately became the cause of the removal of the civilian government of Nawaz Sharif in October, 1999. In fact this joint statement was a humiliating statement for Pakistan (Muhammad, 2000).

Most commentators blamed Pakistan government for losing an opportunity to awaken international attention to the Kashmir dispute. Chief of Army Staff General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif were considered responsible for approving this misconceived operation. Some people considered this operation as a complete fiasco. All Party Hurriyat Conference describe the Pakistan policy as unpredictable. Another leader of APHC said ‘first we were excluded then betrayed’ (Sattar, 2013).

Although the issue was resolved through the Washington Accord but the relations remained tensed until the Agra summit between the two countries. The outside pressure continued on both countries to resolve their difference; as the Kargil conflict proved that the nuclearization of both the countries also failed to prevent the chances of any war in the coming days between the two countries. Before relations could be good following Kargil, however the military coup overthrew the regime of Nawaz Sharif in Pakistan in October, 1999. General Pervez Musharraf, the Chief of Army Staff declared martial law in the country and became the Chief Executive of the country. The strain in the Pakistan-India relations again sensitive as Musharraf was considered as the man behind the Kargil war.

Because of the military takeover Pakistan became isolate in the global community, as the United States imposed additional sanctions against the military regime in Pakistan. International community greatly criticized this move by the Musharraf and favored

sanctioned against Pakistan. This hostile environment against Pakistan benefited India, and they use their full diplomatic power to criticize the posture of Pakistan in the world. (Dubey, Agra Summit And Kashmir, 2001) India clearly released her statement that Indian government is not ready to continue the process of bilateral talks with a dictator. However at last India changed its position and the Prime Minister of India Atal Behari Vajpayee sent an invitation to Pervez Musharraf to visit India in 2001.

Conclusion

Pakistan and India are two close neighboring countries. Both the countries have strained relations since their independence in 1947. Although there are several disputes between the two countries but the main dispute which, created hostility is the Kashmir dispute. The Lahore Declaration held in 1999 is an important step in the history of bilateral negotiations between the two countries. The Lahore declaration provided an opportunity to both Pakistan and India to resolve their differences and especially to solve the Kashmir issue through the political means at highest political level and to normalize the strained relations created after the nuclear explosions by both the countries in 1998. The Lahore declaration was a symbol of political will from both sides and the international community saw a scene of hope of peace in the region, good and pleasant bilateral relations between the two countries.

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