

# Pakistan-India Impasse



Yasir Masood | The Express Tribune, Karachi | April 05, 2017  
<https://tribune.com.pk/story/1374393/pakistan-india-impasse>

Despite dangling and dilly-dallying epochs between the two neighbouring nuclear giants, Pakistan and India must bury the chronic contentions which have been decaying their relations for such a long time. History witnessed that despite Herculean struggles while attaining independence in 1947, Pakistan slipped away from the clutches of the British crown as a determinant country.

Rolling through turns and turmoils, now it is a breathing reality to India and to the rest of the world that Pakistan is a non-collapsible state, and thus cannot be failed, frailed or fractured by the external flirtations of the black-eyed states. Packed with natural resources and human capital, Pakistan is likely aiming to invigorate its dream of becoming an 'Asian tiger'.

Undoubtedly, at present, relations are at a stalemate because our neighbouring geographical giant is in the hands of small-hearted hardliners and hegemonic right-winged, anti-minorities, anti-Muslim, and anti-Pakistan — the BJP.

Astoundingly, sincere efforts were made by a true statesman like Atal Behari Vajpayee — India's former prime minister from the BJP — who wrote musings in the quest for better Pakistan-India relations at the dawn of this millennium. Nawaz Sharif, then prime minister, also resolutely reciprocated. However, hate-mongers on both sides tuned up relations back to the old symphonies.

India needs to stop the wild goose chase while holding hostile, historic sentiments against Pakistan for today's synchronised and moving relations. Lately, Islamabad has gone the extra mile to call for repeated dialogues which are no less than an embarrassment now. Meanwhile, India is blatantly abjuring the adherence to the Simla Agreement and the composite dialogues: that it will bilaterally establish peace by finding quick fixes to the issues. For sanity to prevail, truth has to be given a nod to extricate from the current tailspin between both countries. Pakistan has a je dure to consider Indian occupied Kashmir (IoK) incumbent to move forward with the peace process, whereas India winks at the Kashmir issue, and instead tags terrorism as the real cause of halt in the dialogue process.

Indian-occupied Kashmir — a bleeding thorn — remains unresolved which surely holds both atomic powers in a ticklish situation for decades. First things first, India must stop taking the mince out of Kashmiris, Pakistan did not start the recent uprising in Kashmir and cannot stop it either. In the current insurgency, about 30,000 Kashmiris have been injured, maimed or bruised in the state-sponsored terrorism.

The more New Delhi grinds down the suppressed Kashmiris, the more *azadi* (freedom) slogans will zap against Indian defiance. Similar thoughts were presented by the renowned Indian historian Rajmohan Gandhi — grandson of Mahatma Gandhi — in *The Economic Times* last year in September: a de facto plebiscite already seems to have taken place there. Kashmiris appear to have voted with untiring throats, with eyes destroyed or deformed by pellets, and with bodies willing to fall to the ground for what the heart desires. And the vote seems to be for azadi.

Yashwant Sinha, a former Indian foreign minister from the BJP, also believes that “Kashmiris have lost their fear of India.” Subduing IoK from the peace talks will not be a workable solution both for Pakistan and India. Indian-occupied Kashmir must be accepted as a political problem by India in the first place, otherwise, the South Asian gridlock would remain in a crisscross.

India must remember that terrorism is an external conspiracy and not the cause of a standstill between both countries. In the 1970s, original sin was committed by India when terrorism was first entrenched to ignite the separatist movements against Pakistan. Even today this monster is being fed by India to destabilise Balochistan and the rest of Pakistan, while supporting extremist organisations like the Tehreek-e-Taliban-Pakistan (TTP), etc. India should realise that no other state in the world like Pakistan is undergoing tests and trials against the horrible and horrendous acts of terrorism. In fact, the Pakistani nation has epitomised that the callousness of extremists can only be curbed by standing against them with undying wills and valour. Undoubtedly, these triumphs of uprooting terrorism/extremism on the part of Pakistan have already been widely acknowledged by the entire globe but India.

Islamabad does not shy away from talking about terrorism with New Delhi, but compromises on eroding IoK and other core issues drag the current state at sixes and sevens. Pakistan has garnered untold lessons from

its mistakes of Islamic extremism and buried the concept of 'strategic depth' to anchor peace in the region. Unfortunately, extremism and jingoism are frequently reflected in the Indian civil society, the media, military and political parties, etc. which are indeed undermining dangers for a secular India ahead. Albeit, Afghanistan could have become a bridge of peace between both countries but India's proxy with the former against Pakistan can turn the whole region into terrible turmoil.

Despite the prevailing grumpy situation between Pakistan and India, constructive cooperation in the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) and the Bangladesh–China–India–Myanmar Economic Corridor (BCIM-EC) can carry the seeds of immense potential to change their fortunes. The economic trajectory of CPEC can certainly knit together South Asia, Central Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Europe. Afghanistan and Iran are also dreaming to partake in CPEC and more interestingly the quiet rise of Bangladesh and Nepal will likely get a boost from this game-changer project, too.

Historic opportunities are on offer for both countries, as the economic transition is taking place from the west to the east. It is high time to rid of the hysteric world of Pak-India hostility as the Tri-Star economic chain of Pakistan, India, and China can surely stoke tangible prosperity in South Asia and beyond. A regional guild must harbour some sanity; India has been opposing SAARC which surely breeds more antagonism in the region.

For peace to make inroads between Pakistan and India, back-channel diplomacy must be restored. Finally, the media, think tanks, and people-centric dialogues combined with reciprocal utilisation of prudence and political acumen can lead to a peaceful and welcome settlement of issues between Pakistan and India.