

Conclusion: Principles

Sixty years is too long a time to waste in hostility. During this period, the countries that have been engaged in conflict for centuries have turned a new leaf. This has only been possible because of a genuine desire of the concerned states to make a new beginning and concentrate their energies on progress of their people. Once the states are determined to commit themselves to the future of their people, they find it easy to renounce the excuse they have been holding to justify acrimony. UK and Ireland, Germany and France, Italy and Austria, Japan and Russia, Iran and UAE, Israel and Egypt, and many other neighbouring states have demonstrated that it is possible not to mortgage the future to conflicts of the past. Some of them have found innovative solutions to issues straining their relationship and some have allowed the overall bilateral relations to supersede unnecessary conflicts.

India and Pakistan can reach the final settlement and make a new beginning. This is possible if and only if they are determined to restructure their bilateral relations and also restructure and re-orient their internal dynamics. The final settlement between India and Pakistan is essentially about the final settlement of individual identities, power structures and resource management. Any effort to resolve conflicts that are purely of bilateral nature is bound to be temporary at best, and counter productive at worst. Therefore, this volume has not paid any attention to bilateral issues such as Siachen, Wular Barrage, Sir Creek and others. It is an open secret that official talks have nearly found solutions to these issues. It is possible to convert near solutions into real ones if and when India's political leaders and Pakistan's military leaders decide to do so.

The issue of Jammu & Kashmir is more difficult to resolve than the issues mentioned above, but much easier to resolve than the issues mentioned below. It is critical for India and Pakistan to agree to a set of principles and values, if they want to resolve this specific issue. There must be an agreement that the resolution would be based on the victory of principles of freedom and justice, over the principles of terror and coercion. There must also be an agreement to consider and accommodate, as much as possible, perspectives of all those groups who represent different sections of people of all parts of Jammu & Kashmir from Jammu and Ladakh to Gilgit and Baltistan. It is much more important to consider the perspective of such groups that have the courage and confidence to test their representative credentials, and not resort to violence and terror.

The tragedy of debate on Jammu & Kashmir so far has been that the authorities in India and Pakistan, as well as the international community have short far too much interest in the views of those professing violence and ignoring those pursuing peaceful reconciliation.

Once India and Pakistan decide to honour the principles of peace and justice, they will have to decide whether the operational principle for finding the solution has to be division and partition or unity and reconciliation. If the leaders of India and Pakistan decide to pursue a solution based on discussion and a third partition of the sub-continent, they must take responsibility for the outcome that will follow in terms of millions of deaths, injuries and refugees.

If they decide to apply the principle of unity and reconciliation, they should convert the Line of Control into the Line of Cooperation. We have suggested a method to do so in a phased manner, deriving from nothing else but the discussions between the Foreign Secretaries in 2004. However, we believe that it is possible to construct many other formulae to achieve this objective.

A significantly more important issue is that of water security of Pakistan and Northern India. Pakistan's per capita water availability has declined substantially since 1947. It is expected to reach the threshold level of 1000 cubic metres by 2007 or latest by 2010. This will affect agriculture, the mainstay of Punjab and Sindh economy, sparking off conflicts between the two provinces. There is a serious risk of Sindh's secession, in the next 5-10 years, perhaps along with Balochistan.

Pakistan hopes to come out of this dilemma by securing physical control of the river water upstream in Jammu & Kashmir on the Indian side. Therefore, it wants sovereignty over the Kashmir valley and parts of Jammu, covering most of the catchment area of river Chenab. Thus, the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960, which was based on the

principle of division, has succeeded in postponing the crisis by fifty years. Any further division will case the final explosion.

Instead, India and Pakistan need to find a solution on the basis of the principle of unity and reconciliation. When applied to the water situation, it translates into integrated water development to be urgently planned and implemented. This will be predicated on an atmosphere free of terror in the entire Indus Water Basin.

A much greater challenge is to limit the spread of fire of the India-Pakistan hostility across South Asia. Both countries have their respective vulnerabilities. Pakistan accuses India of exploiting the internal conflict of Sindh and Balochistan. India accuses Pakistan's Inter Service Intelligence Agency (ISI) of fuelling fires in Assam and other parts of the north-east. More recently, there were reports of ISI building networks of Maoists in Nepal, Naxalities from the Indian states of Bihar and Andhra Pradesh and ethnic insurgents in Assam. There is also an active effort to change the nature of the Assamese agitation from an ethnic to a religious one. The final settlement must be on the principle of non-interference in internal affairs by the military, political, diplomatic or through propaganda or any other means.

Obviously, internal problems are a result of many factors including flawed domestic policies, which are distinct from the India-Pakistan resolution. India and Pakistan must reach the full, final and comprehensive agreement that now or in the future they will not assist any insurgency either from the rival, own or third country territories. India argues that it is not involved in any such activity since Pakistan has been unable to produce concrete evidence. However, India must undertake, on a reciprocal basis, a commitment to the principle of non-interference in the future.

An associated challenge is to develop a shared vision of the South Asian region. India and Pakistan have allowed the fire to spread beyond their own boundaries. They appear to be supporting rival political groups in Afghanistan and Bangladesh. As bigger neighbours, it is their moral responsibility to promote the principle of unity and reconciliation across the region.

In order to contain and gradually douse fires, it is essential to curb extremism. The final settlement is possible if and only if it is predicated on disallowing the state and parastatal agencies to use terrorism as instruments of state policy, annihilate all groups that spread violence as an instrument of public strategy, and reform education and economy to enable the forces of progress to thrive. The final settlement between India and Pakistan is essentially about the final settlement of conflict between social modernism and religious orthodoxy within Pakistan. It is also about containment of extremism in India's religious right.

The question of internal restructuring is closely linked to the world-view and identity of the two states. India has accepted the identity of Pakistan as a sovereign state. If there are any doubts on this account, India must do whatever possible to clarify its perspective. On its part, Pakistan needs to establish and project its identity as a progressive state for the welfare of its 150 million people, and not a movement to protest against religious statistics of the region or an instrument of conquest of South Asia and the world. At the same time, India has to develop a global vision to its role and carry Pakistan with it as a friend and a partner.

The core issue between India and Pakistan is about the kind of people we want to be. It is about the redefinition of us. It is also about the path we want to take in our mission of redefining our states, our nations and re-dedicating them to the future of our people.

For sixty years we tried the path of so called realpolitik. It included wars, arms race, hostile propaganda, terrorism, secret negotiations and official and unofficial third party mediation. This realpolitik did not take into account real facts about the situation in Gilgit-Baltistan, importance of rivers and the spreading of fire. Obviously, realpolitik, which is not grounded in real facts, has not delivered. The time has now come to re-orient our politics from that of power games, excuses, division and destruction to a process based on recognition of hard facts on the ground. The time has also come to question the strategy of division, which has failed repeatedly at the cost of the lives of innocent people. As if the earlier two partitions are not enough, Pakistan's military rulers now want to apply it on a much wider scale to divide everything they possibly can from the district of Hyderabad in Sindh to Jammu division in Jammu & Kashmir. Even on the Indian side, right wing ideologues propagate four-way division of Jammu &

Kashmir. The time has come for the people of India and Pakistan to examine the consequences of the strategy of division and partition. Let us for once, give the principles of unity and reconciliation a chance and make a new beginning in this region. Sixty years of bloodshed and hostility is enough.