[Pakistan Day and the resolution for peace](https://nation.com.pk/29-Mar-2019/pakistan-day-and-the-resolution-for-peace%22%20%5Ct%20%22_new)

Durdana Najam March 29, 2019

This year March 23 took on a special meaning. Deviating from the usual script of warning the enemies of dire consequences, just as weapons and missiles moved past the parade road, the message this year was about harmony and coexistence. At once power was snatched from the spoilers of peace when minorities were weighed on the same scale used for the dignity and self-respect of the rest of the nation. The flag, said the commentators of the March 23 parade, was a testimony of Pakistan being a nation-state that naturally absorbs diversity. The caveats, however, were not totally forgotten. It was said--loud and clear--that any evil eye cast on Pakistan will be responded with equal force. It was unequivocally stated that to preserve its identity, integrity, independence and perhaps to deter aggression and war Pakistan will prevent any ‘one state’ from becoming a hegemon in the region. The nuances of the script---peace, war, power and docility -- were further enhanced with the spectacle of friends of Pakistan from China, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Azerbaijan, Bahrain and Brunei attending and participating the Pakistan Day parade.

Juxtaposed with India’s attack on Balakot last month, Pakistan’s restrained attitude to accommodate friends and foes alike for the purpose of regional and national stability was a double scoop for a nation that has long been waiting the leadership to act mature in the time of crisis rather than becoming the usual stuff exhibiting petulance or putting personal interest ahead of National’s. India’s attack had lent credence to Pakistan’s narrative of braving an aggressive neighborhood in its eastern flank, which if not restrained can throw not only Pakistan but the entire region into crisis.

It was also a moment to recollect the Two-Nation theory, the basis of Pakistan’s creation from United India. Earlier the theory had come in sharp focus when the toxic Indian media and political environment responded to the Pulwama attack in a way that no Muslim was spared of slurs, whether in Pakistan, in Indian Held Kashmir or anywhere in India.

On March 23, 1940, seven and a half years before the creation of Pakistan, the All India Muslim League passed Lahore Resolution, often referred to as the Pakistan Resolution. It stated: “Resolved-----that the area in which Muslims are numerically in a majority, as in the North Western and Eastern Zones of India, should be grouped to constitute independent states.”

The demand for independent states had its roots in the Two Nation Theory about which Jinnah said: “Hindus and Muslims belong to two different religious philosophies, social customs and literary traditions. They neither intermarry nor eat together, and indeed they belong to two different civilizations which are based mainly on conflicting ideas and conceptions.”

Jinnah had envisioned India to be a federation with provinces having residuary power. The struggle for an independent country grew in strength only when Congress became adamant to make India a Hindu state. Two events, in this respect, convinced the Muslims that minorities in India would remain in a perpetual state of subservience. The first was the decision to adopt Hindi instead of Hindustani as the national language. Unlink Hindi, which is strictly the language spoken by Hindus as the name implies, Hindustani combines both Hindi and Urdu. The second decision was to adopt Bande Mataram as the National Anthem. Drawn from a novel, Ānandamath, depicting Muslims as villains and the British as liberators of Hindus from the Muslim’s tyranny, Bande Mataram was the last thing that Muslims could take in the name of cultural imposition. The last supper was the refusal of the Congress to accommodate the Cabinet Mission Plan. At this point, Pakistan had become the pivot of Jinnah’s vision in lieu of the independent states as enunciated in the Lahore Resolution.

The partition brought blood and dread. Never had Jinnah imagined that people who had been living together for centuries, sharing happiness and sorrows, would have no qualms in slaughtering one another. It took the breath out of the world seeing love transformed, in a blink, into a blood cuddling hate. Unfortunately, this hate would not cease to stalk Pakistan, which in the face of leadership crises, not only tore the country apart but also built silos of more hatred in the garb of ethnic and linguistic division. That Pakistan could come out of such challenges and reinvent itself has in itself been commendable.

On this Pakistan Day, we saw the glimpses of a reinvented Pakistan.

Dedicating March 23, 2019, to the movers and shakers of Pakistan movement and to all those who had laid down their lives to protect Pakistan, a message was sent out to the Pakistanis that their country is here to live and survive. By acknowledging the sacrifices of the Pashtuns in the war against terrorism, the message was sent to those using the Pashtun card to polarize the country that Pakistan is indivisible.

The road to a progressive Pakistan is strewn with challenges, but with the narrative of peace, it would not be too long before we see this journey traversed and made into a success story.

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