**Cherishing Animosity**

**The recent ‘alarming surge in provocative statements from Indian leaders asserting unwarranted claims over AJ&K’ should not surprise anyone.**

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April 29, 2024

[Newspaper](https://www.nation.com.pk/newspaper), [Opinions](https://www.nation.com.pk/opinions), [Columns](https://www.nation.com.pk/columns)

India and Pakistan are in a state of perpetual animosity. Several ideological and territorial disputes and differences keep both countries engaged in finding faults with each other in one way or the other. Despite having tremendous opportunities for cooperation for the welfare of people on both sides of the fence, the preferred way of coexisting seems to be nurturing hostilities. No one will let any opportunity pass by to belittle, embarrass, or threaten each other. Meanwhile, experts and think tanks are seen busy doing nothing but rubbing into the past - portraying a bleak future – or mourning over missed opportunities - or reinventing the wheel.

Hence, the recent ‘alarming surge in provocative statements from Indian leaders asserting unwarranted claims over AJ&K’ should not surprise anyone. Simply put, it is a quid pro quo situation. You talk about IIOJ&K, why shouldn’t we mention AJ&K? The nomenclature and adjectives have changed over the years, but distrust and mistrust-orientated hymns remain the same.

[Jhelum police bust robbery gang, recover cash](https://www.nation.com.pk/30-Apr-2024/jhelum-police-bust-robbery-gang-recover-cash)

The successive governments in Islamabad and New Delhi would show readiness to address issues but nothing substantial was achieved during bilateral talks, backdoor channels, or interaction at all levels. Lately, especially during the two terms of PM Narendra Modi, India has virtually refused to even talk to Pakistan.

Given the ‘nuclear’ nature of both neighbours, the international community is wary of the situation getting out of hand. Hence, they would ignore the exchange of hot words between the two most powerful countries of South Asia and overlook even the accidental firing of a cruise missile. Little do India and Pakistan realizes that by staying eternal enemies, they have provided a pressure tactic to major powers to twist their arms as and when required. Or keep them under their watch, always.

Over the past few decades, several theories have been floated by eminent personalities and reputed institutions, suggesting ways and means for India and Pakistan to coexist peacefully. Unfortunately, nothing has worked so far. Even habitual optimists would refrain from visualizing a comparatively healthier scenario when it comes to envisaging the future of the two South Asian archrivals.

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The following nine reasons may explain why India and Pakistan are likely to be embroiled in a state of perpetual animosity indefinitely unless something dramatic happens in the region:

One: A serious lack of a futuristic approach keeps policymakers living in the past. India has yet to realize that in 1947, the other country that appeared on the world map was – Pakistan. Ask any Indian expert why Pakistan is an enemy. See if he goes beyond repeating certain historical events and allegations of terrorism. Ask any Pakistani expert the same question and you will get the same answer except that the word ‘terrorism’ will be replaced with ‘Kashmir’. Little will they realize that issues are there to be sorted out pragmatically and not through emotional arguments. It’s a story of two emotionally charged nations. The cause? The sheer absence of logic and wisdom. The effect? Too much emphasis on rhetoric.

[Balochistan’s Apex Committee takes important decisions to eradicate terrorism, smuggling](https://www.nation.com.pk/30-Apr-2024/balochistan-s-apex-committee-takes-important-decisions-to-eradicate-terrorism-smuggling)

Two: Pakistan conveniently ignores the fact that India is bigger in size – in every aspect. India conveniently overlooks the fact that cordial relations with Pakistan might bring the hitherto elusive peace in the region. Both disregard each other’s good points while emphasizing the bad. A test? Ask any Indian expert to name one good thing about Pakistan. Rest assured you would be looking at an extremely perplexed face.

Three: The focus is on sorting out each other rather than issues. Otherwise, there is always a middle way to meet.

Four: Who will be blamed for any wrongdoing or if something ‘unexplainable’ happens? Therefore, the good old suitability clause comes into play whenever some serious effort is underway to mend ways. Detractors would eventually succeed in scuttling the talks. Both would agree on the lack of political will in addressing the issues, but surprisingly - would not discover, invent, or produce the requisite political will.

[KP inter-madrassa special games to get underway today](https://www.nation.com.pk/30-Apr-2024/kp-inter-madrassa-special-games-to-get-underway-today)

Five: There are too many experts on both sides – armed with an array of solutions. They don’t realize that without taking into consideration the other’s point of view, a viable solution is not possible. Secondly, they forget the fact that their brilliant ideas do not mean anything to policymakers – or the real stakeholders.

Six: Explaining the obvious is difficult. India is seemingly happy to follow the two age-old maxims: you must have a sworn enemy, and – the neighbors are bound to be unfriendly with each other. Here, it conveniently overlooks several other arguments that are based on common language, proximity, and the benefits of people-to-people contact and bilateral trade. Neither do Pakistan and India desire to follow the dynamics of the Sino-India love-hate relationship - keeping the territorial disputes separate from economic relations - nor do they learn from the experience of Germany and France.

[Abducted sessions judge unconditionally released: CTD](https://www.nation.com.pk/30-Apr-2024/abducted-sessions-judge-unconditionally-released-ctd)

Seven: Perpetual animosity means permanent reasons to obtain legitimacy in politics and acquire latest military equipment. Why would an Indian politician lose its constituents’ support by offering an olive branch to Pakistan?

Eight: Pak-India conflicting equation suits the major powers as well as the world’s ammunition industries. New Delhi knows it. Islamabad knows it. However, as the existence of conflict also fits in the indigenous scheme of things, this important factor is ignored too. Finally, no one is paying any attention to what Nelson Mandela once advised – ‘If you want to make peace with your enemy, you have to work with your enemy. Then he becomes your partner.’

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