Indo-Pak enmity mutually harmful

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According to a statement issued by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Pakistan has shared preliminary findings in the Pulwama incident with India in response to the dossier provided by her and also sought more information on the issues raised in their to probe further in the matter. The statement also reiterated that Pakistan was cooperating in the investigations in the interest of regional peace and security. It is pertinent to point out that Prime Minister Imran Khan had not only condemned the Pulwama attack but also offered cooperation in the investigations to unearth the truth when India immediately raised accusing finger towards Pakistan after the assault without any credible evidence in support of her claims.

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In fact it has become visceral for India to blame Pakistan for anything that happens in India and Kashmir; a conduct which has invariably added to the intensity of enmity between the two countries. This strategy is being followed more vigorously since the advent of Narendra Modi as Indian Prime Minister. Unfortunately there are takers of the Indian view at the global level. US Secretary of state Mike Pompeo last week said that the current Indo-Pak tensions were caused by terrorist departing from Pakistan. It is this kind of irresponsible stance by the US and some of its western allies motivated by their commercial and strategic interests in the region which is not only contributing to regional instability but is also encouraging India to persist with her bellicose stance towards Pakistan.

As against this, Pakistan has been persistently making efforts to engage India in a dialogue to resolve the disputes between them including the core issue of Kashmir. The new Pakistani narrative which enjoys unqualified support of the civil and military leadership as well as the masses stems from the realization and conviction that regional peace and security is absolutely imperative for strengthening the avenues of shared economic prosperity by exploiting the enormous potential that exists in the region. Politics apart the reality is that the PML (N) government as well as the present one have pursued this course with sincerity of purpose but these overtures have not been responded to positively. Modi instead chose a path of confrontation and has persisted with anti-Pakistan actions precipitating the hostility between the two countries and making regional peace and security hostage to his own narrow political ends. He almost brought the two countries at the ebb of a possible nuclear war. It was for the first time in the history of the world that one nuclear power attacked the territory of the other. The recklessness shown by Modi could have triggered horrible consequences for both the countries as well as the region had Pakistani government not shown restraint and sagacity to engage the international community to de-escalate the situation. India needs to realize that the continued enmity between the two countries was mutually harmful. The war hysteria created by the Modi government in the wake Pulwama incident for political mileage in the ensuing Indian elections may or may not produce the desired results but the fact is that it did put lives of one billion people of India at risk.

The solution lies in recognizing the ground realities. Closing eyes to them or trying to change them through the barrel of the gun is not going to produce any positive result. The reality is that Kashmir is an unfinished agenda of the partition and its future needs to be decided in consonance with the UN resolutions. The people of Indian held Kashmir are fighting a war of freedom. This indigenous war is gaining momentum by every passing day in spite of the ruthless oppression and killing spree by the Indian security forces.

According to media reports Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi in a message of greetings to Prime Minister Imran Khan on the eve of Pakistan Day said “I extend my greetings & best wishes to the people of Pakistan on the National Day of Pakistan. It is time that people of Sub-continent work together for a democratic, peaceful, progressive & prosperous region, in an atmosphere free of terror and violence” Coming in the backdrop of mounting tensions between the two countries his message taken on its face value is a whiff of fresh air far removed from the madness that was displayed by India after the Pulwama incident.

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There is no doubt about the fact that the leaders of both the countries owe it to their posterity to live in peace with each other and make collective efforts for shared regional prosperity. Somebody has rightly said that it’s the regions that develop and attain prosperity as a whole and not the individual countries. The sentiments expressed in the message reflect the ultimate reality. Modi needs to prove it through deeds that he really wants that to happen. Merely ceremonial and diplomatic niceties are not going to trigger the required change. As is said it takes two to tango. Both Pakistan and India need to make sincere and reciprocal efforts to create a congenial atmosphere for working together.

Modi has to accept the reality of Kashmir dispute and Indian obligation towards the people of Kashmir to allow them to exercise their right of self-determination as per the UN resolutions on the subject and repeated commitments given by Nehru. India has already accepted Kashmir being a dispute between the two countries in the Simla Agreement.

The world history is replete with examples testifying to the fact that wars and disputes have always been resolved through dialogue and peaceful means. For the sake of peace and future of the posterity nations have even abdicated territorial claims against others which were instrumental to initiation of conflicts. The example of EU is before us. Hostile nations abandoned their enmity and became partners in nudging collective and shared prosperity as well as developing a political clout in the management of international affairs.

Modi must rethink his strategy of maintaining hostile posture towards Pakistan and try to resolve all disputes between the two countries including Kashmir through dialogue. The efforts to establish hegemony in the region and adopting a disposition of a war-like state is going to hurt India itself ultimately.

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I am of the considered opinion that what transpired after the Pulwama episode makes it incumbent upon the international community and the UN not to merely show concern over the developing situation but also get involved in facilitating a dialogue between the two countries at the bilateral level to resolve the mutual disputes or re-launch international efforts at the UN forum to have the Kashmir issue resolved as per the UN resolutions.

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