**The more we change**

**[Najm us Saqib](https://nation.com.pk/Columnist/najm-us-saqib)**

April 05, 2021

Is Pakistan still searching for a narrative for its South Asia policy, particularly with reference to the Kashmir dispute? Or, has it already found the correct trajectory for its present and future foreign policy? Are we looking at a real time strategic shift in issues of our core interests or are certain pending core issues tactical in nature? Is Pakistan raising the white flag or repeating the policy of appeasement premeditated? Has the next predicted move from India to force the status quo solution been forestalled? Was it the mediation behind closed doors by the UAE, Saudi Arabia, China, the US or any other actor who carved the path which both India and Pakistan are gleefully following? Or, was it some kind of bilateral understanding reached somewhere in this world, applying the well known principle of give-and-take? Has any leader either in India or Pakistan decided to leave a legacy of sorts by trying to finalise the thorniest issue this region has ever faced?

[More than 234,000 coronavirus cases registered in India](https://nation.com.pk/17-Apr-2021/more-than-234-000-coronavirus-cases-registered-in-india)

The answer to all these questions are known only to those fortunate few who are looking with interest at thousands of commentaries made in the media ever since August 5, 2019. Left with no other option, the political scientists, still looking confident, are playing the conjecturing game and generating all sorts of instructive ideas while New Delhi and Islamabad are quietly mulling over their next moves. All those who thought they should have been consulted on such important and sensitive matters are at a loss to understand exactly what is going on. How is it that developments of such importance took place without soliciting their inputs?

Obvious facts are often deceptive. However, one thing can be said with a bit of certainty; sanity seems to be prevailing. It seems someone has found an opportunity in the midst of chaos. Until the contours of this new ‘relationship’ between India and Pakistan reach their definite silhouette, it would be advisable to avoid conjecturing. Meanwhile, let us focus on what has happened and try to examine the facts. Perhaps, we could make some intelligent guess as to what lies ahead, if at all the recent events have left any space for making intelligent guesses.

[Pakistan reports 4,976 new COVID cases, 112 deaths in 24 hours](https://nation.com.pk/17-Apr-2021/pakistan-reports-4-976-new-covid-cases-112-deaths-in-24-hours)

In its bid to subjugate, and subsequently annihilate Jammu and Kashmir, India is getting away unscathed. The pronounced silence of the international community on the continued violations of human rights in various parts of India, from the much-disputed Jammu and Kashmir, the Balakot incident and to the fate of Islamabad’s dossier on India’s undesirable activities in Pakistan, is most revealing. By achieving the ceasefire at the Line of Control (LoC) and floating clouds of hope of a possible rapprochement with its nuclear neighbour, India is still trying to portray itself as a peace-loving country. Domestically, the government of India has been able to hoodwink its people in forgetting the Ladakh humiliation, the menacing farmers’ protest and its controversial future role in the QUAD by pulling away from the Pakistani hug offered to it in the recently concluded Security Dialogue in Islamabad.

Maintaining and reiterating its decades’ old stance in his letter of felicitations on Pakistan Day and shrewdly inserting the words ‘terror’ and ‘hostility’ therein, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has ostensibly spilled the beans of any future engagement with Pakistan. By conveying so, he has tried to put an end to hopes of any substantial and meaningful dialogue with Islamabad. Reading between the lines, it is not difficult to deduce the latent messages. India has unmistakably urged Pakistan to forget about Jammu and Kashmir and the reversal of August 5, 2019, actions as well as any talks on the ‘core issue’. Leaving the door opened for trade, India has conveyed that for the present moment, the ceasefire at the LoC was the maximum that both countries could achieve.

[US sees Russian response measures as 'escalatory,' reserves right to retaliate](https://nation.com.pk/17-Apr-2021/washington-sees-russian-response-measures-as-escalatory-reserves-right-to-retaliate)

Once again, India has politely rebuffed Pakistan, announcing its intentions of staying the course of Akhand Bharat. Yet again, India has seen Pakistan through the prism of its rivalry with China and not as a sovereign independent nuclear state. Riding on the flying horse of its continued role of the so-called China-containment in South Asia and its future role in the QUAD, India feels confident of it becoming the sixth permanent member of the UN Security Council.

Once again, Pakistan’s great expectations of peace with India have met an undesirable fate thereby utterly disappointing those who maintained that if Germany and France could become true partners after experiencing ultimate hostilities, why not India and Pakistan? Once again, Quaid-e-Azam’s message of ‘peace within and peace without’ and ‘maintaining cordial relations with neighbours’ diligently followed by Islamabad has been responded to by Chanakya’s philosophy, religiously followed by New Delhi. Centuries ago, Chanakya declared that a person should not be too honest as straight trees are cut first and even if the snake is not poisonous, it should pretend to be venomous.

[Iran denounces new US sanctions on Russia](https://nation.com.pk/17-Apr-2021/iran-denounces-new-us-sanctions-on-russia)

All said and done, India has failed at least on one account; it has not succeeded in forcing Pakistan to abandon Islamabad’s principled stand on Jammu and Kashmir. Prime Minister Imran Khan’s letter of March 29, addressed to his Indian counterpart, clearly stated that durable peace and stability in South Asia is contingent upon resolving all outstanding issues between India and Pakistan, in particular, the Jammu and Kashmir dispute. The idea of importing sugar and cotton from India also resulted in reiterating Pakistan’s post-August 5, 2019 standpoint.

On the other hand, an otherwise emotional Pakistan has won the battle of nerves. Exhibiting complete restraint on thousands of violations at the LoC, responding proportionately to the Balakot incidence, dealing with Kulbushan Yadav as per laid down procedures, presenting a dossier for the world’s conscience and not reverting to the last resort even after being hit at its jugular vein, are a few of the many examples of Pakistan’s self-control and maturity.

[White House: Biden to increase refugee admission by May](https://nation.com.pk/17-Apr-2021/white-house-biden-to-increase-refugee-admission-by-may)

One might argue that Pakistan did not have any other option but to accept whatever was coming from India. Well, Pakistan had at least one option that it has exercised, vis-à-vis to focus its attention on setting its own house in order first. One only hopes the efforts to provide relief to the people of Jammu & Kashmir continue with sincerity while the house is being set in order. In this regard, one is waiting for Islamabad to initiate a fresh drive to muster international support on providing comfort to the Kashmiris.