



Nation 20-11-03 Pak-Fel-India **Indo-Pak relations**

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India's recent 12-point peace proposals evoked a lot of interest in Pakistan. Reaction from various sections of society was at once cautious and meaningful. Some reactions were quite straight and forthright and as such there was no problem in endorsing them in toto. However, major point of concern in these proposals was that there was not even a remote reference to problem of Kashmir. It figured only when the prospects of plying a bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad were examined. Pakistan accepted the proposal in principle but knowing the content that the proposal contained Pakistan suggested that the role of the United States at the LoC must also form the part of the agreement. India was not expecting such an intelligent reaction from Pakistan and so, it was visibly perturbed.

Reacting to Pakistan's detailed reply to these proposals, the Indian spokesman conceded that although Pakistan had responded positively to these proposals, yet to complicate matters, it had attached impractical, extraneous and delaying conditions, in respect of certain proposals. The spokesman further opined that, in case, Pakistan's concerns were really sound, it should take immediate steps to end infiltration, dismantle terrorist camps and offer compensation to those affected by terrorism. The spokesman complained that Pakistan, instead of facilitating the process of normalization, had opted to politicize this humanitarian issue by attaching conditions. Such were the harsh comments from the Indian side!

The American officials, however, expressed great satisfaction on Pakistan's positive response to these proposals. America hoped that the current thaw would create momentum towards peace and would result in a dialogue, encompassing all issues including Kashmir.

In this regard, Mr Vajpayee's remarks also warrant special mention. He remarked that a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan was possible only when efforts were made by Pakistan to stop cross-border infiltration, and dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism. Vajpayee, on his part, underscored the need of promoting people-to-people interaction.

wherein comprehensive dialogue could take place.

From the above, it becomes abundantly clear that both the Indian press and the Indian government reflect a new Indian approach. This approach aims at influencing Pakistanis to put pressure on their government to accept conditions which India lays down for opening the dialogue. India wants Pakistan to stop all support to the Kashmiris in their struggle in the realisation of their rights of self-determination, sanctioned by the United Nations.

Efforts for normalisation of relations between the two contending countries is a good move and the process must be facilitated but this normalisation must not be at the cost of withdrawing our support of Kashmiri freedom fighters. India, as a first step, would like Kashmir issue to be shelved so that in times to come, it should be totally forgotten.

Luckily, Pakistan understands this cleverly contrived Indian game. India's real intention is to side track the issue and then push it into oblivion. To counter India's move, Islamabad must call upon India to restore the level of India-Pakistan relationship to the level, whereby India had unilaterally cut off the communication links and reduced the size of the embassy staff. We feel that for India, it should not be very difficult to respond positively to this suggestion.

India continues harping on stopping cross border terrorism. This uncalled for outburst is downright exasperating, as Pakistan has assured India time and again that no such infiltration was taking place. So, to prove her case once again Pakistan should press for strengthening the UN Military Observers Group. This group should effectively monitor the movement and the situation at the Line of Control. Mere statements to this effect are not enough. This is perhaps the only way to counter and address the Indian intransigence.

Pakistan must also raise its voice in all international fora including the media and the civil society organizations like the Amnesty International and the Asia Watch to highlight India's barbarism.

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In this regard, Mr Vajpayee's remarks also warrant special mention. He remarked that a meaningful dialogue with Pakistan was possible only when efforts were made by Pakistan to stop cross-border infiltration, and dismantle the infrastructure of terrorism, Vajpayee, on his part, underscored the need of promoting people-to-people interaction. He was convinced that this interaction would lead to strengthening cultural exchanges and economic cooperation with Pakistan. He further disclosed that India's main concern was to encourage such elements in Pakistan who would recognize the folly of permanent hostility towards India.

Apparently Mr Vajpayee's remarks are quite innocent, but in fact, these are quite intriguing. Only a discerning eye could see through his cunning game!

Commenting on these proposals, the Hindu press also focused on the normalisation of relations between the peoples of the two countries. These analysts make us believe that the real contentious issues can be resolved only when the people of India and Pakistan are encouraged to develop trust and confidence in each other. These analysts suggest that the Indian government should provide incentives to the people of Pakistan for normalisation of relations, so that these could press their government to create conditions

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Past experience has proved beyond doubt that India is in no mood to enter into any meaningful dialogue with Pakistan. So, Pakistan should build up a strong case for the international community to effectively facilitate the settlement of issues and bring peace and normalisation to this turbulent part of the world.

In addition, world opinion in favour of dialogue must also be mobilised through electronic media, think-tanks and civil society organizations. In this exercise, India, on its part, has successfully influenced world powers including USA to endorse its viewpoint on terrorism. In view of this grim situation, Pakistan should not feel complacent at all. Indeed, it should work vigorously hard to counter India's nefarious designs that it has been nurturing against Pakistan since its inception.

India is trying desperately hard to arrange frequent visits of intellectuals, media experts and youth to Pakistan. The motive behind this exercise is that these frequent exchanges of visits would create climate against Pakistan. This is a very serious planning, and to counter it Pakistan too should try to pay India in the same coin.