



BUILDING REGIONAL STABILITY IN SOUTH ASIA

Report of Track II Dialogue held on 8-9 February 2010

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Indo-Pak dialogue has had an intermittent history. The official dialogue process started in 2004 and saw initial progress. Some contend that by the third round it had lost its momentum and was becoming more of a ritual than substantive. Even this came to a halt after the Mumbai attack as there was hardly a possibility of a resumption under the changed circumstances. Yet, at the Track II level, a dialogue continued and the IPCS has played an important role in the same. A recent dialogue was held at Bangkok on 8-9 Feb 2010. This is a brief report on the proceedings of that dialogue and the views expressed.

The problem that confronts India and Pakistan today is how to keep channels of communication open in these times of worsening situation in the region. Developments in the Af-Pak region, growing terrorism and deadly violence in both countries, and emerging new conflicts relating to a highly emotional water issue are some of them. Though critics argue that the dialogue in the past has made minor changes, it is worth pursuing and expanding further.

SESSION 1

India-Pakistan Relations: A Status Report

The Indian delegation emphasized the need to look at the past, in any attempt to revive the dialogue and for looking forward. In particular, events and issues that led to the resumption of the dialogue in 2004, after the failure of the 1998 process, should be identified and studied. Back channel diplomacy has been effective in the Indo-Pak context. In addition to Track II efforts other means should also continue, outside the public glare and it should be broad based touching on all issues of concern.

The Pakistani delegation concurred that the burden of history continues to remain a major issue in creating a trust deficit between India and Pakistan. In recent years, despite many rounds of dialogue and interaction between the civil societies, this deficit has only marginally improved. Thus, Track II dialogues should be strengthened to provide alternative approaches to India and Pakistan for resolving their issues. The composite dialogue initiated by Musharraf ran into trouble, mainly because of the internal situation within Pakistan, especially after the judiciary controversy. Zardari's situation today, within Pakistan is similar. Internal political situation is playing a major role in preventing him from pursuing a coherent policy vis-à-vis India.

Though there have not been any major breakthroughs in Indo-Pak relations in recent years, there have been significant developments, which should be expanded and developed further. For example, the ceasefire between India and Pakistan along the international border and LoC has stayed intact, despite minor exceptions. There is no need for India and Pakistan to look for new ideas or themes to improve their relations. There have been adequate themes identified already, which need to be built upon. The existing CBMs between the two countries should be effectively implemented.

According to the Indian delegation, there should be continuity in Pakistan's approach towards India, especially relating to terrorism in India. Numerous statements have been made by the leaders of Pakistan in recent years, in terms of not allowing Pakistan's soil to be used against India. These statements should be supported by action at the ground level. There also needs to be continuity in Pakistan's approach to India, irrespective of the change in leadership. If Musharraf is perceived as 'history' inside Pakistan, should those actions taken and promises made by him vis-à-vis India be totally negated? Pakistan should clearly understand that India will not tolerate another Mumbai-type terrorist attack. Though the possibility of such an attack is remote, India is seriously worried about this. Every action by the non-state actors should be converted into an opportunity; India and Pakistan should work together in keeping these non-state actors away from interfering in their regular dialogue process. Stopping the peace and dialogue process is unlikely to bring any major achievements for India.

The Pakistani delegation, however, maintained that the people of Pakistan do not support terrorist activities against India. A large section in Pakistan prefers to have good relations with India. Terrorism is an equally worrying domestic concern for Pakistan. People in Pakistan do not support Mumbai-type attacks against India. Terrorist attack on India by some Pakistani citizens should not be viewed as the involvement of Pakistan, as a country. Moreover, in the Mumbai attack, some Indians were also involved. India should understand that Pakistan is confronted with numerous Mumbai-type attacks every day, from Khyber to Karachi. The State and people of India should also understand, when it comes to terrorism, for Pakistan, it is not merely a bilateral issue, but a fundamental issue of governance. India should also understand that dealing with terrorism, for Pakistan, is not only linked with its commitment, but also with its capability. Pakistan, today, is a State at war with itself for its own survival.

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India and Pakistan should take into account, the domestic and international environment, in which the dialogue between the two countries is taking place. On Afghanistan, India is seriously worried about Pakistan's intentions and possible strategies. Afghan territory should not be used by Pakistan, to wage a war – conventional, sub-conventional and covert, against India. Likewise, India should also not use Afghan territory against Pakistan. Violence and terrorism in J&K has not come to an end. Given the recent trends, there is every indication of violence being revived, with support from elsewhere.

According to the Pakistani delegation, 'strategic depth' in Afghanistan, is a cliché that has been blown out of proportion. In today's environment, 'strategic depth' does not matter to Pakistan, hence it should be avoided in the Indo-Pak dialogue on

Afghanistan. Majority in India underline Musharraf's efforts on J&K. It should be emphasised, Musharraf's policies did not have any legal sanction or majority support in Pakistan. These questions were not even satisfactorily addressed during Corps Commanders meetings, as commonly perceived in India. It should be recognized that Pakistan is going through a tough phase in its contemporary history. There are serious hurdles and challenges in its internal political atmosphere and external environment.

On the Indo-Pak context, Pakistan has done enough; hence the 'do more' slogan is irrelevant. However, it is India, which should do more and display a positive gesture. India is a growing economy; more importantly, its growing military expenditure is worrying Pakistan. Along with this, new military strategies and concepts in the recent years, put forward by India are a cause for serious concern. Every country has a right to engage in new military strategies; however, adequate care should be taken when these strategies are discussed in public, by authorities at the highest level. Such public promulgation and posturing, create a negative feeling in other countries. India should also look into what is happening within its borders. There are Muslims in India that are getting radicalized and there is a need for the Indian society to look objectively into why a section of the population is unhappy with the government of India.

Though there have not been any major breakthroughs in Indo-Pak relations in recent years, there have been significant developments, which should be expanded and developed further. For example, the ceasefire between India and Pakistan along the international border and LoC has stayed intact, despite minor exceptions.

There is a need for Pakistan to see India in a totally different perspective, not within the narrow perspective of India as an enemy country but as an opportunity. Pakistan should work towards improving the relations with its neighbours, especially India, and try to gain as much as possible in this process. It is certainly not in the interest of India to have its neighbours in a state of political turmoil and which perceive New Delhi as an enemy.

SESSION 2

Combating Terrorism Together?

If India and Pakistan have to work towards addressing the question of terrorism, there is a need for some kind of a consensus, especially at the Track II level. The strategic community of both countries have a role to play in creating this consensus. To a large extent, this community – both in India and Pakistan, is convinced that the terrorist attack on Mumbai in 2008 was aimed at derailing the Indo-Pak peace process. However, there was no consensus on how to address the major questions, which followed the Mumbai attack. It is also essential for the strategic community to understand, what the non-state actors want to achieve, by engaging in terrorism.

What is their end game, for which they are using violence? Once their end game is understood, the strategic community in India and Pakistan could then consider devising common strategies to address a common threat.

Today, in Pakistan, many of these non-state actors consider the State in Pakistan to have no authority to prevent them from fighting in Afghanistan. For them the cause of religion created by God is more important than the cause of any state created by

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men. Additionally, more than the frontier regions of Pakistan, for example the FATA, the volatile regions of south Pakistan, especially in Punjab and Sindh, need to be addressed. Non-state actors in Pakistan fight for different reasons and objectives. For example, in Swat, they fight for quick justice; in the FATA, they fight to impose a particular kind of Islam; and in other places, they fight for sectarian reasons.

India and Pakistan should make a distinction between the various jihadi groups in terms of national, regional and international groupings. Trans-national jihadis have been lying low in recent years and do not pose a major threat to Pakistan. In Pakistan, however, there has been a strategic U-turn vis-à-vis fighting terrorism,

which India should understand and appreciate. This offers an unique opportunity to fight terrorism in the region jointly and both countries should work towards devising a common strategy to fight terrorism. Pakistan is capable of addressing the threat of terrorism, but what is needed is a legal-police approach towards countering terrorism.

Pakistan faces serious threats from its governance process, which has been the main cause for most of its terrorism. Pakistan looks for assistance from India in tackling terrorism, which both countries should perceive as a common threat. Intelligence Agencies from both sides should sit together and consider setting up of a permanent mechanism to address various issues relating to terrorism.

There are clear differences within Pakistan, on the question of the State's incapability vs unwillingness, in dealing with terrorism – both within and outside. A section within the country believes, that Pakistan is soft on the Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), but not on the TTP. No government in Pakistan feels strong enough to tackle the Lashkar; there is also a wrong perception within a section of the government, that the good will of Hafiz Saeed is more important than the good will of India. If Pakistan has to differentiate amongst the various non-State actors – for example within the TTP, Taliban and Lashkar-e-Toiba and pursue different strategies to fight them, it would be extremely difficult for India to work together with Pakistan.

Issues relating to infiltration and decline of violence are important from an Indian perspective. What is even more important than the above, is the question of Pakistan's intentions – long term and short term vis-à-vis terrorism.

States do make mistakes while using certain non-state actors as a part of their security policy; India, for example used the LTTE in the 1980s and learnt hard lessons, even at the cost of a former Prime Minister. Today, India has learnt its lessons and will be shy of repeating its mistakes. Likewise, Pakistan should also be able to learn from its mistakes and adjust to new realities. While everyone in India knows where Dawood Ibrahim is in Pakistan, Islamabad has been continuously denying it. There have been numerous local reports about him. While one in India could understand the reasons behind Pakistan's denial, what is beyond comprehension is the denial of Pakistan to recognise the presence and activities of people like Hafiz Saeed and Masood Azhar. What prevents Pakistan from trying them, in their own courts?

Reasons for the growth of terrorism in Pakistan need to be understood in a historical perspective. While Pakistan aligning with the US, against the public opinion, at the ground level is well commented, the sidelining of local administration, especially the civil administration by Islamabad and Peshawar in terms of decision making and its implementation have totally alienated the local people. This has been a major reason for the lack of popular support for government initiatives against terrorism. Extremism is a growth industry in Pakistan today. Neither India nor the US will be able to help Pakistan in the latter's fight against terrorism. Though the media is playing a crucial role, in Pakistan's context, there is a need for an internal regulation. Media's present role is not helping Pakistan in fighting terrorism.

Intelligence agencies, militants and violence – do not operate in vacuum. There is a political context, which India and Pakistan should understand. Unless the political context is addressed, problems created by the intelligence agencies and non-state actors are likely to continue.

Both India and Pakistan have been paying only lip service in terms of combating terrorism 'together'; unless, there is a fundamental change in the leadership in both countries, there is no scope of both countries working together. Intelligence agencies, militants and violence – do not operate in vacuum. There is a political context, which India and Pakistan should understand. Unless the political context is addressed, problems created by the intelligence agencies and non-state actors are likely to continue.

SESSION 3

Cooperating in Afghanistan

India and Pakistan should look into the future of Afghanistan, especially, after the exit of the US. Under what conditions will the US leave Afghanistan? What will be the nature of political structure in Afghanistan? India and Pakistan have to worry about these crucial factors. India and Pakistan should also try to understand, what the Afghans want; what kind of political structure they are envisioning and what kind of

assistance they are looking for, from India and Pakistan, to sustain the political and economic process. The US is planning to invest one billion dollars towards the reintegration of Taliban forces. With the increase in military operations, the US hopes, that more cadres of the Taliban will switchover.

The Taliban do not have the military capacity to defeat the US led forces in Afghanistan. Similarly, the US led forces will never be able to physically silence the Taliban. If the American objective in Afghanistan is to prevent the Afghan soil from being used by any external state or non-state actors, the Taliban should be agreeable to such a formulation. Such an initiative is workable through a Contact Group, with Saudi Arabia and Pakistan playing a major role. What is preventing the Taliban from negotiating with the present dispensation in Kabul is the presence of the US. Unless, the US leaves Afghanistan, the Taliban will not negotiate with Karzai, a precondition not acceptable to the US and even Karzai. The US is unlikely to stabilize the surge in violence in the urban towns of Afghanistan. With the US planning to increase the troop presence, and the Afghan National Army (ANA) also coming into being, the exposure of the forces to Taliban attacks is more. There is likely to be more targets and more casualties.

Insurgency across the Durand Line has grown tremendously, with three non-state actors leading the violence – the Taliban led by Mullah Omar, TTP and the Hizb-e-Islami led by Hekmetyar. It is important to find out where al Qaeda fits in today in the equation between these three groups.

Pakistan should understand that the return of the Taliban is not in their interest. A victorious Taliban is unlikely to agree to Pakistan's plans of making the Durand Line permanent. Today, in Afghanistan, the ethnic minorities put together, constitute a majority and any negotiation with the Taliban should understand the sentiments of these minority groups, who are against any return of the Taliban. Besides, there are serious internal differences within the Pashtun community; not many amongst the

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Pashtuns agree with the Taliban objectives and strategies. The Taliban is not only unacceptable to the ethnic minorities of Afghanistan, but also to many countries including Iran, Uzbekistan and Russia. India considers the Taliban as an instrument of Pakistan's foreign policy; though there are differences between the TTP and Pakistan today, there is not much evidence of Taliban having a benign attitude towards India.

For India, the neutrality of Afghanistan is important. If the Contact Group, as suggested by some, could guarantee Afghan neutrality in the future, it would be acceptable to India. Given the situation, the Afghans would prefer

neutral support from both India and Pakistan. However, what is important is that this neutrality should be strictly enforced with international sanctions, perhaps by the UNSC. No country should be allowed to use Afghanistan for its own interests at

the cost of others. There should be a guaranteed non-interference by any outside power in Afghanistan.

India and Pakistan, despite the problems of trust can work together in Afghanistan. For example, in Kunar River, both countries can cooperate in building hydel projects. Also both countries with their enormous experience can help build the Afghan civil service. Islamabad should not be upset with the Indian presence in Afghanistan, as long as it does not undermine Pakistan's interests. The only concern from Pakistan should be that the Afghan soil should not be used against Pakistan.

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India and Pakistan should cooperate in ending narcotics production in Afghanistan. Japan has already promised to help in eradicating the drug menace in Afghanistan. SAARC could proceed faster in its efforts to implement the SAFTA; this would ensure a good market for the agricultural products from Afghanistan, providing them some economic relief.

SESSION 4

Building Nuclear Stability

There is a clear asymmetry between India and Pakistan, when it comes to nuclear weapons. Pakistan has been and will always be conscious of this asymmetry, which will play an important role in any dialogue with India on nuclear issues. In the 1990s, nuclear ambitions of India and Pakistan were relatively small. Today, they are considerably different and expanding continuously.

Nuclear Arms Control is a slow process and is likely to take a longer time to establish. It cannot be done at a short time. Today, there seems to be an understanding between the US and Russia; their interactions may result in a definite understanding. Soon, China will also become a part of this understanding. Once there is an understanding at the international level on nuclear weapons, there might be a ceiling imposed on all countries with regard to nuclear weapons. There is a fear today, within the nuclear establishments of India and Pakistan that both the countries are trying to increase their capacities as much as they could, before this ceiling is imposed.

Nuclear dialogue between India and Pakistan has been drifting now. Though in some instances, both countries have done well, in the nuclear dialogue, there is a long way to go. Irrespective of what is happening at the international level between the US and Russia, and on the renewed nuclear disarmament efforts, India and Pakistan should continue their dialogue on nuclear CBMs.

India's nuclear deal with the US and the subsequent waiver by the NSG to India will result in substantial qualitative and quantitative changes in India's nuclear assets. The nuclear deal is likely to result in a ballistic missile race in the region. While

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Pakistan fears the Indo-US nuclear deal will result in India producing more nuclear weapons, India fears the plutonium plants in Pakistan, with the weapon grade material. On certain nuclear issues between India and Pakistan, there are no solutions. For example, Pakistan does not believe in India's No-First-Use doctrine. Hence, whether India pursues such a doctrine or not, it does not matter to Pakistan. Nuclear redlines are flexible and cannot be fixed. Irrespective of these differences, as nuclear arsenals grow, both countries have to dialogue and negotiate. India's understanding of Pakistan's redlines may not be accurate, but relatively close.

Credible deterrence for India is primarily aimed at China and not Pakistan. It is likely to pursue the nuclear triad, mainly with China in its mind, which will take eight to ten years to

arrive. India and Pakistan should sincerely pursue nuclear risk reduction measures. Transparency and verification are two key issues for nuclear risk reductions. India should have seriously considered Pakistan's proposal on a nuclear restraint regime. Though the CBM on the exchange of nuclear installations continue till date, there are numerous other CBMs, which could be planned or revised.

SESSION 5

Moving Forward on Jammu and Kashmir

The discussions on Jammu and Kashmir clearly showed that the participants saw the J&K problem both as a challenge and as an opportunity. Various dimensions of the Kashmir issue were discussed threadbare by the participants. It was pointed out by some participants that there is a linkage between the unresolved issue of Kashmir and the spread of terrorism in the region and it was therefore all the more important for both the governments to resolve the issue in earnest.

It was noted by most participants that the contours of the J&K issue have changed a lot from a long-term point of view, even as there has been temporary setback in the recent past due to the breakdown of the India-Pakistan peace process in the wake of the 26/11 terror attacks in Mumbai. While the stalled peace process has dimmed the hope of a solution to the Kashmir issue anytime soon, it was recognized by most participants that the J&K issue is not the same as it was in the 1990s. The three major issues that were discussed were the positive changes in the political positions

of India and Pakistan; the lack of seriousness on the Kashmir issue; and; the importance of making the borders between India and Pakistan, insignificant.

First, it was agreed that Pakistan has indeed moved the Kashmir issue to the composite dialogue – one among the many issues discussed between the two countries – from its position of it being the core issue between two countries and the resolution of which has been considered by Pakistan as the prerequisite for forward momentum on all other issues with India. Pakistan, it was pointed out by some participants, has also gone back on its insistence on the implementation of the UN resolutions on the Kashmir issue as well as on its support to the fighters in J&K. India, on its part, has now come to understand the Kashmir issue not merely as a law and order problem, but as a political problem within its territory which needs its political attention. This new understanding of J&K by New Delhi has led to a slew of political measures that it has undertaken in the state including the Round Table conferences by the Prime Minister; various reports generated by government-appointed committees on crucial aspects of the J&K state and the problems it faces; and the dialogue that goes on between New Delhi and the various parties in J&K.

Second, the participants also shed light on another aspect of the Kashmir issue wherein they pointed out the problems that have crept into the normalization process in J&K. Some participants pointed out that both India and Pakistan are not serious and sincere about resolving the Kashmir issue. It was pointed out that there was a tendency to treat Kashmir as a piece of 'real estate' in both countries, which should be avoided. Many participants pointed out that it is disappointing to see New Delhi adopting a 'passage of time' strategy vis-à-vis Kashmir. New Delhi, it was pointed out, should stop treating Kashmir in a bureaucratic and ad-hoc manner and that the Kashmiris should not be confused with half-baked, non-serious and 'seasonal' peace proposals which would only help bring more confusion in the minds of the people of the state. Such confusion also makes them disillusioned about the possibility of the return of normalcy. It was also pointed out that Pakistan should not try to dictate the dialogue process between New Delhi and Srinagar by pressurizing the Kashmir-based political parties to boycott the internal dialogue process. It was also stressed by some participants that Pakistan's sense of 'victory' (having convinced the international community to accommodate the moderate Taliban) should not allow it be more adventurous on Kashmir. Given the increasing Indo-Pak rivalry in Afghanistan such fears may indeed become a reality.

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Third, was the major proposal for the resolution of the Kashmir issue which was put forward by former Pakistan President, Gen. Pervez Musharraf. He had proposed a solution that did not propose to redraw borders between the two sides of Kashmir but in essence aimed at making borders insignificant. This proposal, many Indian participants pointed out, still has wide currency in India, both in New Delhi and Kashmir. Indeed, in Jammu & Kashmir both mainstream as well as dissident parties had been positive towards the Musharraf proposals on Kashmir. A major irritant

It was felt necessary by the participants to put on the table some recommendations. These ranged from releasing of political prisoners from jails in J&K to the Indian government taking steps to give self-rule to the state. Other suggestions included allowing more cross-border interaction between the two sides of Jammu & Kashmir, establishing consultative mechanisms and then joint management of some aspects of governance such as setting up joint bodies to manage environment; implementation of CBMs already agreed upon by the two countries; and initiating a debate on regional autonomy in the state.

now, it was pointed out, is that there seems to be a tendency in Pakistan to go back on the Musharraf legacy and thereby his proposals on Kashmir. Indian participants made it clear that this might be counterproductive for the peaceful resolution of the Kashmir problem. Many participants argued that the various strands of a Kashmir solution which were being negotiated between the governments of Manmohan Singh and Pervez Musharraf should be revisited since they involved three important elements which are widely perceived to be important in resolving the Kashmir issue: non-alteration of the borders of J&K, self governance, and some form of joint consultation mechanism between the two countries.

Lastly, the workshop participants also tried to spell out some of the key elements of a possible way ahead on Jammu and Kashmir. Even as the Indian and Pakistani governments have not clearly spelled out the details of how they intend to proceed with their dialogue on Jammu & Kashmir in the ongoing dialogue process, it was felt necessary by the participants to put on the table some recommendations. These ranged from releasing of political prisoners from jails in J&K

to the Indian government taking steps to give self-rule to the state. Other suggestions included allowing more cross-border interaction between the two sides of Jammu & Kashmir, establishing consultative mechanisms and then joint management of some aspects of governance such as setting up joint bodies to manage environment; implementation of CBMs already agreed upon by the two countries; and initiating a debate on regional autonomy in the state. It was pointed out by some participants that there have to be intra-J&K as well as inter-J&K dialogues. One concrete suggestion was that the bus service between the two sides of the state should not be restricted to merely members of divided families. It was noted that the fact that cross-LOC trade survived the 26/11 terrorist attacks in Mumbai is very encouraging. One of the interesting suggestions that came up during discussions was the possibility of resolving the J&K issue with a 'one region, two systems' model.

Finally it was pointed out that when the India-Pakistan peace process resumes, the two countries should not try to go back to the drawing board all over again to think of ways and means of resolving the Kashmir issue. There are enough proposals on the table and these need to be taken on board and a solution can flow from them. It is also important to note that the people of Kashmir have spoken out in different forums and voices and they need to be heard and their opinions about their own future should be adopted by official negotiators in India and Pakistan.

SESSION 6

Preventing Conflict over Hydro-Resources

The Indus Water Treaty (IWT) of 1960 has been hailed as an example of successful conflict-resolution between India and Pakistan. However, the discussion on the issue of water between India and Pakistan made it clear that water is likely to be a major issue of conflict between the two countries in the years to come. Though the water issue might seem less troublesome than the other Indo-Pak disagreements and contentions, the various disputes surrounding the Indus Water Treaty have the potential to be one of the most problematic issues between the two countries. There is an overwhelming feeling in Pakistan, some participants pointed out, that the IWT was unfair to Pakistan and gave India too much water. The two chairs pointed out that not much discussion has gone into addressing the issue of water in the two countries. It was pointed out that today's Pakistan faces a very grave water crisis and one third of the country, in the days to come, will face this problem. Much of Pakistani insecurity about the IWT comes from this.

Much of the discussion centred on the discourse in Pakistan regarding its water crisis and India's alleged role in aggravating it. Pakistan has been maintaining that India has violated the Indus Water Treaty (IWT) agreed upon by the two countries in 1960. Under the IWT, India has the use of water from the rivers Sutlej, Beas, and Ravi and Pakistan was given the use of the water from the Indus, Chenab and Jhelum. Under Article-II of the treaty, India was also given 'non-consumptive' use of the rivers given to Pakistan. Pakistan has argued that India has violated the treaty by reducing the water levels of the rivers given to by the IWT. Over the years, Pakistani participants pointed out, the water flowing into Pakistan has reduced which the Indian participants pointed out was due to reduced rainfall and snowmelt and not because of any intentional wrongdoing by India.

Though the water issue might seem less troublesome than the other Indo-Pak disagreements and contentions, the various disputes surrounding the Indus Water Treaty have the potential to be one of the most problematic issues between the two countries.

Some of the major issues on the water issue between India and Pakistan were stated as the disagreement on the Wullar/ Tulbul and Kishen Ganga projects, the Kashmir water issues and the need to use water as a framework for cooperation between the two countries.

First, Pakistan has raised objections to the following Indian projects, the Wullar barrage (or the Tulbul navigation project, the Indian term), and the Kishan-Ganga hydroelectric project, Sawalkote Hydroelectric Project and the Baglihar Hydropower Project. It was also pointed out that the water conflict between the two countries is not purely bilateral in nature; there are international dimensions to it. Within Pakistan, southern Pakistani provinces such as southern provinces of Sindh and Baluchistan have been complaining that provinces such as Punjab take more share of water. On the Indian side, the IWT and the Indian adherence to it have been complicated by domestic politics within J&K. Indeed, the J&K Assembly passed a resolution in 2003 asking New Delhi to reconsider the IWT in order to safeguard the interests of the State. Many political parties within J&K have argued that the IWT is not in the interests of the state and that the Government of India should therefore rethink it.

Second, some participants argued that even though there are indications that the India-Pakistan conflict on J&K may be lessening, the impending conflict over water can revive the conflict since the Indian River water projects contested by Pakistan are situated in the state of Jammu and Kashmir. Indeed, many analysts have argued that one of the reasons for the continuation of the Kashmir problem is due to the linkage of the state to the question of water scarcity in Pakistan. Some Pakistani participants cautioned that the new Kashmir discourse in Pakistan is overloaded by the water issue: while the question of Kashmir is political in nature, the water issue is emotive and touches upon people's daily lives. This is an issue that has the potential to wage a 'people's war' since this issue, unlike other political ones, would have direct bearing on the lives of people from all walks of life. In such a context, it would be easier for interested parties, read anti-India, to create popular ire against

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India. This process of linking water scarcity in Pakistan with Indian hydro-electric projects in J&K and the consequent demonizing of India by extremist organizations in Pakistan is already happening.

Third, participants observed that there is a need to look at the issue of water in a professional and technical manner rather than letting the hardliners making use of it to spread hatred against the other country. Indeed, many participants suggested that the ongoing conflict over the Indus waters is an opportunity for the

two countries to focus on a large number of related issues which are important for both the countries. They suggested that the water-related agenda should be enlarged by India and Pakistan to include issues such as forest management, deforestation, glacier melt and its impact, along with other environmental and ecological problems.

The participants maintained that India and Pakistan should make full use of the potential of the IWT in order to further cooperation in the Indus water basin. Indeed, the IWT does offer many more avenues of cooperation between the two countries than what they have utilized so far. More specifically, article VII of the treaty talks about future cooperation between the two countries in carrying out joint studies and engineering works in the upper Indus catchment area on both sides of the LoC. However, some participants cautioned against ‘tinkering’ with the present state of IWT and argued that doing so would further aggravate tensions between the two countries. In any case, such rethinking of the IWT should not take place, they argued, till the two countries normalize their bilateral relations.

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Session 7:

The Way Forward

At the end of two days of comprehensive interactions, the main recommendations agreed upon are listed below:

- Peace and stability in India-Pakistan relations is essential for the well being of South Asia. After nearly 63 years of hostility between India and Pakistan, it is critical that all stakeholders work for sustainable peace between the two countries. Civil societies in India and Pakistan, by and large, support the goal of peace and reconciliation; peace constituencies in both countries must therefore, be further strengthened by providing them greater space and support. It is essential that the trust deficit and the burden of history not be allowed to impact on the task of moving relations forward.
- Trust can be best built through multiple uninterrupted dialogues, positive incremental steps, Confidence and Trust Building Measures, and – most critically – through acts of statesmanship by the leaders of the two countries.
- A grand reconciliation can only be ensured, in the long-term, through engagement at every level: civil society meetings, official dialogues, engagement of political leaders, cooperation between business and corporate leaders, visits of artists, sportsmen, media, talks between the armed forces, Track II engagements, etc.
- Temporary setback in inter-governmental relations should not be allowed to impinge on people-to-people cooperation. Attempts should be made to create

a visa-free regime for important stakeholders: including academics, journalists, businessmen, students, artists and former senior officials.

- Progress made in previous rounds of talks should be carried forward in the official dialogue.
- Terrorism is of deep concern to India and Pakistan and the memory of the Mumbai attacks is still alive and continues to inform public opinion in India. Today, terrorism and extremism pose an existential threat to Pakistan. Indian concerns about terrorism and the terrorist threats to India are as much of a serious concern for Pakistan. Terrorism and extremism need to be comprehensively and permanently defeated.
- India and Pakistan should seriously consider initiating an institutionalised, regular but discreet dialogue between the intelligence chiefs (the heads of R&AW, IB and ISI and IB Pakistan) of both the countries.
- The back channel on Jammu and Kashmir must be resumed at an early date keeping in view the fact that all stake-holders particularly the people of J&K will have to be consulted at some stage. If Jammu and Kashmir is considered as a piece of real estate, there is little hope of a way ahead. Therefore, the welfare of the people of Jammu and Kashmir must be considered to be of paramount concern. In this context, all agreed CBMs must be more robustly implemented.
- The media is playing a critical role in shaping popular perceptions. Thus, they have a great responsibility to help strengthen the constituency for peace. A continuing dialogue between journalists, editors and proprietors of media houses is needed.
- A sustained dialogue on ensuring strategic stability in South Asia must be an essential part of the bilateral dialogue. There is also need for discussion amongst experts on critical doctrinal issues and the need to work towards creating a Nuclear Safety, Assistance and Collaboration Regime in the region within the framework of minimum deterrence. In this context, a trilateral nuclear dialogue which includes China must also be pursued.
- The problem of water is becoming a matter of great concern and there is a need to address misperceptions in this regard. The Indus Water Treaty has withstood the test of time and has a well established dispute-settlement mechanism. Any concern about hydro-resources of the Indus river system should be taken up through the Permanent Indus Water Commission. Within the framework of the treaty, the two countries must also share best practices on water management with each other. Environmental and other experts with domain knowledge, from both countries, must be encouraged to provide concrete recommendations for better and optimal management of hydro resources given the huge challenge that the scarcity of water will pose for the region in the future.

- A stable, prosperous, sovereign and independent Afghanistan is in the interest of India and Pakistan and both countries must work for this goal and hold talks to allay each others apprehensions.
- Track II dialogues are designed to move beyond official stated positions, find a way forward, and provide alternative approaches to the governments of Pakistan and India as well as other important stakeholders. It is vital that Track II dialogues be encouraged by both New Delhi and Islamabad.

DELEGATION LIST

Pakistani Participants

1. Ms. Samina Ahmed , South Asia Project Director at the International Crisis Group.
2. Gen. (Retd.) Ehsan ul Haq, former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.
3. Amb. Aziz Ahmad Khan, former High Commissioner of Pakistan to India.
4. Gen. (Retd.) Aziz Mohammad Khan, former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.
5. Amb. Humayun Khan, Foreign Secretary of Pakistan.
6. Amb. Riaz Khokhar, Foreign Secretary of Pakistan.
7. Amb. Rustam Shah Mohmand, former Ambassador of Pakistan to Afghanistan.
8. Ms. Sherry Rehman, Member of Parliament.

Indian Participants

1. Maj. Gen. (Retd.) Dipankar Banerjee, Director, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies.
2. Mr. AS Dulat, former Director, Research and Analysis Wing.
3. Ms. Sagarika Ghose, senior editor and prime time anchor, CNN-IBN.
4. Mr. Happymon Jacob, Assistant Professor, Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, Jawaharlal Nehru University.
5. Prof. Amitabh Mattoo, Professor, Centre for International Politics, Organization and Disarmament, Jawaharlal Nehru University.
6. Rear Adml. (Retd.) Raja Menon, Chairman, Task Force on Net Assessment and Simulation, National Security Council.
7. Amb. G Parthasarathy, former High Commissioner of India to Pakistan.
8. Mr. Vikram Sood, former Director, Research and Analysis Wing.
9. Mr. Siddharth Varadarajan, Strategic Affairs Editor and Chief of National Bureau, *The Hindu*.
10. Dr. Mallika Joseph, Deputy Director, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies
11. Dr. D Suba Chandran, Deputy Director, Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies



Institute of Peace and Conflict Studies

B 7/3 Safdarjung Enclave

New Delhi INDIA

