

PAKISTAN INDIA TALK AND KASHMIR  
ISSUE

---

**TERJUMAN-UL-QURAN**

June 2003

PROF. KHURSHID AHMAD



## **PAKISTAN INDIA TALKS AND KASHMIR ISSUE**

By Professor Khurshid Ahmad

Who can deny the importance and value of talks between Pakistan and India, and whatever progress is made in this regard is welcome, yet what needs to be understood is that talks are not about mere meetings or repetition (as if in aside) of respective positions. Talks can be useful and leading to results when there are at least a sense of the nature of the conflict and a sincere desire and effort for its solution. But if, on the contrary, the “hand of friendship” is extended only detachedly, the refrain of “integral part” is repeated endlessly, and the chorus of “cross-border infiltration” or “terrorism” is resorted to ad nauseam, then how can the doors of meaningful dialogue and mutual understanding be opened?

Yet another obstacle in the way of harmony between India and Pakistan and their smooth relations is that unrealistic attitude that is composed of both friendship and enmity. In the case of conflict, ill-feelings soon result in abusive language and forays. Then, the winds of friendship begin to sweep and create such an atmosphere of “understanding” and “care and regard” as if there never were any reasons for confrontation and developing bad-taste, as if there have never been wounds inflicted in all this while. Suddenly, ‘castles in the air’ are being built, lofty poetic imaginations take everyone in their grip, sometimes it is Lahore’s ‘illusory ways’ and at others it is Agra’s ‘Such heights, Such Lows’. At one time tables are arranged and decorated for signing agreements, at another even the botheration of saying “good-bye” is considered too much. At times, warnings of pre-emptive strike are issued, and armies equipped with lethal weapons come to borders to remain in the state of eyeball-to-eyeball for 16 months and the nuclear arsenal gets restive to explode; yet at other times, flowers of friendship are showered from one side of the border as “the last wish of life”, rivers of “sincerity and seriousness” are seen flowing at the other side of the border; and thus are erected Taj Mehals of expectations on sandy foundations.

This emotionalism and lack of balance, imaginary thinking that overlooks ground realities and historical evidence and factors, all create hurdles towards developing true understanding of the issues and rectification of the situation. Neither this kind of friendship is realistic, nor is this antagonism the only option. Emotional “summit meetings” are no solution to the difficulties of the way. We should realize that only through cool-minded analysis of the affairs and conflicts and solid and realistic homework can we find out ways and means for the resolution of problems. Without the role of the forces and factors that have highlighted the issue, no train of talks can move forward. In the name of confidence building measures (CBMs), we have been doing everything from the Liaqat-Nehru Pact of 1949 to the Tashkent Agreement of 1965, to the Shimla Agreement of 1973 and the Lahore Declaration of 1999, and yet there are no signs of destination’s coming any nearer. To us, key problems are just two; others are either minor or sprout from these key problems.

The first main problem is about accepting each other open-heartedly, and this cannot be done by merely going to Minar-e-Pakistan. From the Day One, India has considered the Partition as “illegitimate” and has said this aloud. Accepting the scheme of 3rd June 1947 for the Partition, the working committee and the entire leadership of the Congress had openly declared that it was temporary and that India would unite once again. After forcefully separating East Pakistan (exploiting our own weaknesses) from West Pakistan, Indira Gandhi had announced that ‘we have taken revenge from Muslims for both their 1,000-year rule and “the wrong” of the Partition.’ Establishment of a “united India” by undoing the line of Partition is the manifesto of the BJP, RSS and other Hindu extremist parties. A number of Indian intellectuals do not consider Pakistan as a “succeeding state” of the British rule, but they call it a “seceding state”. This is their mind-set, from which stem out both policy and attitudes. Without changing this mind-set, and without recognizing each other as legitimate state, change in the situation is simply unlikely.

Not only Modi is the killer of Muslims, the entire leadership of BJP, including Advani and Vajpayee, campaigned for the last year elections in Gujarat on the basis of enmity with Pakistan, ISI and Pervez Musharraf, and changed their imminent defeat into a victory. As recently as on 2nd May 2003 a BJP-Shiv Sena MP confidently suggested in the BBC program “Question Time India” that India should send suicide attackers into Pakistan, also pledging that he himself was ready to enroll in any such group of suicide attackers. When the editor of the Asian Age said it was against the norms of a civilized society, 70% of the audience (only civilized and educated people are invited in these BBC programs!) excitedly supported the idea of targeting Pakistan with such suicide attacks. Then, on the proposal of making the Line of Control (LoC) the permanent border, the deputy foreign minister of the BJP declared in fury and scorn that ‘we want whole of Kashmir, and LoC cannot be accepted as permanent border’!

This is the mind-set that comes in the way of establishing good relations. There are people in Pakistan who issue statements against India, but as a whole the State of Pakistan, its government, and its mainstream political leadership has never laid claim on any territory of India and apart from Kashmir (which is a disputed territory) there are no geographic disputes between us. Pakistan recognized India open-heartedly. It, however, wants to deal with India on the basis of equality and sovereignty; whereas India considers Pakistan a thorn in the body and wishes to see it as a vassal state, India rather considers Pakistan its separated part!

So, the first main problem that needs a realistic attitude is about recognizing each other at equal footing and to set the tradition of respecting, not debasing, each other’s ideological and civilizational differences. The Two Nation theory, which is the basis of our State, is, to them, the root of all ills. They are not ready to regard ideological and civilizational differences as genuine. This is the source of their intolerance and violence. If the talk of friendship is accompanied by a regard to these differences, then Pakistan is ready to go “more than half way”. Pakistan’s all political and religious forces have the same view in this respect. It is India that has to change its

posture of ideological and civilizational dominance, stop casting doubts on the legitimacy of our political and civilizational identity, to strengthen the tradition of mutual cooperation on the basis of preserving respective cultural and civilizational uniqueness. The cultural and economic ties – not just the confidence building measures – can take roots only when relations are based on equality and mutual respect; or, they would be shadowed by hypocrisy and they would remain restrict to one or another framework of colonial hegemony and domination or subjugation, which is against the spirit of healthy cooperation with dignity.

The second main problem is about the future of the State of Jammu and Kashmir. With respect to law and international commitments, the whole territory of Kashmir is disputed and the incomplete chapter of the agenda of Partition. India is in occupation of a larger part of the State only forcefully. After the Shimla Agreement, and in its violation, it has deceptively occupied Siachin as well. Siachin or Wuller, or such other issues, are not permanent problems; they are part of the Kashmir dispute. The Kashmiri people have always, but especially during the last 14 years, shown their alienation with India. This is a fact before the whole world, which has been born out by the blood of 60,000-70,000 people that they are neither part of India, nor is any system in which they are under the Indian Constitution acceptable to them. They should have the right to decide their future according to the resolutions of the United Nations, and the right that was restored to North Ireland and East Timor must also be given to them so that they can decide about their future with their own free-will.

There are three parties to the Kashmir dispute: Pakistan, India, and the people of Jammu & Kashmir. There is no other way to the solution of the dispute save that the three engage in dialogue with open mind and heart.

---