Future Of India, Pakistan And Jammu-Kashmir People Lies Together

I. Approach

For the last one and a half decades, we have been acting upon the idea that the problem of Jammu-Kashmir, constituting today a highly intractable issue and one of the most dangerous flash-points of the existing world, can be properly resolved through a three point compromising proposal that reconciles the interests of the three parties concerned with the problem (i.e., India, Pakistan and the people of Jammu-Kashmir). The proposal holds: (a) that the foreign and defence matters of Jammu-Kashmir be handled jointly by India and Pakistan or by a Indo-Pak condominium; (b) that the state of Jammu-Kashmir be an independent state, with sovereign powers in all matters, except defence and foreign affairs (to be handled by Indo-Pak condominium); and (c) that all ethnic communities in Jammu-Kashmir be given the maximum possible autonomy.

This three point compromising formula was not the outcome of a mere subjective conjecture, but the product of a sober assessment based on two points. The first was that, the ongoing world process of globalisation is not an imperialist trick, but an objective phenomenon arising out of the new scientific-technological developments that have made human mental inter-action possible at the speed of light and the physical inter-connection happen at the supersonic speed. We were fully convinced that the demands of the process of globalisation (despite desperate opposition by the corporate capitalist leaders and their concealed agents through their double-dealing tricks, characterised by saying one thing and doing the other; diehard leftists upholding communist model standing for state capitalism; various sects of religious fundamentalists; lumpen elements; etc.) will make countries (or national units) inter-dependent, and that these inter-dependent countries may, firstly, organise themselves into regional and somewhere in continental formations and finally lead to the development of one human unit (or human society), comprising various ethnic and cultural parts. The other point was that, despite the continuing Indo-Pak tension (originally arising from the 1947-partition and pre-partition Hindu-Muslim communal riots, followed by three post-1947 Indo-Pak wars), the 55 year long Indo-Pak confrontation would under the impact of globalisation ultimately give place to a new Indo-Pak friendship and cordiality.

We steadfastly acted according to the above understanding, firstly, by organising ourselves into an Indo-Pak Amity Front (1989), then transforming it into a Forum For The Peaceful Resolution Of Jammu-Kashmir Problem (1993) and later restructuring the Forum into a Front For The Trilateral Resolution Of Jammu-Kashmir problem (2000). All these changes were necessitated by the changing mass consciousness. The Trilateral Front launched a vigorous mass campaign mainly confined to Jammu administrative region (that was the hub of the extremist forces standing for all types of inhuman and anti-environmental make-believes) to highlight the three point formula as a just proposal for the resolution of Jammu-Kashmir problem.

Now the time has come when the sympathisers of the Front For The Trilateral Resolution Of Jammu-Kashmir Problem be activated in Kashmir and Ladakh regions and the Front be also established on the other side of the LOC, called Azad Kashmir.

II. How Matters Are Proceeding

Today, when the humanity has entered the first decade of the 21st century, a new situation of relaxation has appeared in Indo-Pak relations. This has naturally raised the question as to what lies behind this relaxation. Is it a product of the bilateral talks between India and Pakistan as claimed by Atal Bihari Vajpayee and General Musharraf and the media of the two countries? The facts do not substantiate this claim. Only two countries were standing in an eyeball-to-eyeball position on the border. Both Vajpayee and Musharraf were ordering their respective armies to get ready for annihilating the other side. Not more than six months earlier, both were accusing each other in a derogatory way. Even now, the ruling BJP and its 2 leaders—Vajpayee and Lal Krishna Advani—continue to owe their firm loyalty to the fundamentalist theory of Hindutva as their vision,

perspective and stand-point at all times and places, while Musharraf and his team hold on to the Islamist concept as their future and present reference and starting points.

Can such revivalist and fundamentalist approaches ever think of establishing peace and tranquillity in the world on their own? Obviously, all their declarations of bringing normalcy and peace in the subcontinent are not the result of their own statesmanship, but the compulsions of the newly developing social reality, i.e., the process of globalisation or the phenomenon of the inter-dependence of countries.

The chief manifestation of the aforementioned new social reality is that it has turned the instrument of war (formerly considered to be the ultimate way for resolving any problem, however difficult it may seem to be in the beginning) as an unproductive and ineffective venture. The ineffectiveness of war as the final medium of sorting out social problems is obvious from the setbacks suffered by the US, the biggest superpower of our times, at the hands of the Iraqi and Afghani people. In fact, the US attack on Iraq and Afghanistan has given a new fillip to terrorism, i.e., the U S war on terrorism has proved counter-productive. Further, it can be also seen from the fact that in all the ongoing-armed conflicts in the world, none of the combatants is in a position to win a decisive victory.

Secondly, it has raised the social stature of the mode of dialogue, friendship and cooperation as the most appropriate way of handling problems.

Thirdly, it has created a new consciousness among the world people for opposing the war which (with the use of weapons of all-around destruction) causes immense harm to environmental and human resources.

Are the afore-mentioned new developments novel phenomena or some unheard of things? Historical experience shows that, whenever there occurs a fundamental change in human inter-action with nature (resulting in the development of highly important new scientific-technological knowledge) and accordingly a new inter-dealing among people within human society, there follows a basic (or systemic) change in all spheres of human life, ideological, economic, cultural, political and the area of the security of life. No one, however powerful he may be and whatever spiritual or materialistic doctrine he may hold, can, if he is a realist, resist the demands of the newly-emerged social reality. And this is what our two pragmatist Indo-Pak leaders—i.e., Vajpayee (the theoretician of calling Indira Gandhi as the Goddess Durga for splitting Pakistan into two parts during the 1971 Indo-Pak war) and Musharraf (the author of 1999 Kargil War)—are today doing and raising their points for getting the Noble Peace Prize at the earliest possible opportunity.

III. What Really Needs To Be Done

Given the new situation in the world, characterised by the denigration of war as the ultimate technique of determining the social truth and the up-gradation of the dialogue, negotiations, friendship and cooperation as the most effective method of settling any issue, the top executives of India and Pakistan signed a joint statement on January 6, 2004, to address all bilateral Indo-Pak issues, including Jammu-Kashmir, through bilateral talks, And this marked the initiation of a new phase of relaxation in Indo-Pak relations and the start of a peace process in the subcontinent.

The course of the peace process will, as the experience shows, not be one of smooth sailing, but a difficult forward movement marked by controversies and fierce verbal exchanges, particularly on the issue of Jammu-Kashmir. One such polemic has already occurred after the 12th March statement of General Musharraf when he referred to Jammu-Kashmir as a core issue to which India did object and Pak defend. The only way to avoid verbal confrontation is to refrain from repeating one's old stand on any issue and speak in terms of the 6th January joint statement. To carry forward the peace process to its logical conclusion, it is necessary to understand the fact that, while leaving aside the discussion on whether Jammu-Kashmir is a central issue or one of the contentious issues, Jammu-Kashmir is the chief cause of bedevilling Indo-Pak relations for 55 years and the only reason for three Indo-Pak wars. It is also a fact that, without resolving Jammu-Kashmir problem through a just and rational solution between the three parties concerned, i.e. India, Pakistan and Jammu-Kashmir people, a just and durable peace cannot be established in the subcontinent.

At the present moment, the only question that remains still unanswered is the question as to who represents Jammu-Kashmir people. The answer lies in two social facts. The first fact is that, taking

into account the reality of its disputed nature (as accepted by the UN), overwhelming majority of nation-states, including both India and Pakistan (as mentioned in 1972 Simla Pact and 1999 Lahore Declaration), the majority of the people of Jammu-Kashmir is mainly represented by those who accept Jammu-Kashmir as an unsettled problem. The other fact is that if the foregoing statement is not acceptable to any main contender, then elections in Jammu-Kashmir can provide the required answer. In our view, the former proposition is more appropriate and positive,

Going by the above facts, the task confronting Jammu-Kashmir people is that they should, while consolidating and carrying forward the peace process to its logical conclusion, make an appeal to all those groups (including two factions of Hurriyat Conference) who accept Jammu-Kashmir as a disputed issue and stand for resolving it on a just and rational basis to constitute a broad united front.

The UF Should Undertake The Following Tasks

The first task should be to continue the united front till the final resolution of Jammu-Kashmir problem, while trying its level best to evolve a common formula for Jammu-Kashmir resolution.

The second task should be to help India and Pakistan in the adoption and taking of confidence building measures in order to establish and strengthen a state of normalisation in Jammu-Kashmir, especially Kashmir Valley. While preparing the list of confidence building measures, the united front may also give attention to the following proposals.

For Establishing Normalcy In Jammu-Kashmir,
Particularly The Valley

a) Unilateral ceasefire by India in regard to militancy.

b) Release of all political prisoners.

c) Stoppage of all human rights violations in Jammu-Kashmir by all forces, particularly those of India.

d) Withdrawal of a part of Indian forces deployed in Kashmir valley to the barracks.

e) Appointment of a jointly-agreed Indo-Pak commission to investigate into the complaints of human rights violations, committed by three sides, i.e., India, Pakistan and the militant groups and to recommend proper compensation to all victims or in case of deaths to their families by the concerned violator or offender. In case of violations by militant groups, the compensation to be paid by India and Pakistan jointly.

For Establishing Normalcy In India-Pak Relations

a) To extend the present Indo-Pak ceasefire on the border.

b) Withdrawal of the forces of the two sides one km behind the Line of Ccontrol.

c) Joint patrolling by the contingents of the two military forces.

d) Signing of the three agreements on (1) Siachen, (2) Wullar Barrage and (3) Sir Creek, which had been preliminary approved by India and Pakistan some five years ago.

e) Opening of some closed routes between India and Pakistan and between Jammu-Kashmir and Azad Kashmir: i) Munnavao-Khokharabad, ii) Fazalka-its opposite point, iii) Amritsar-Lahore (since restored), iv) Gurdaspur-Shakargarh, v) Srinagar-Muzaffarbad, vi) Poonch-Palandri (via Rawalakot), vii) Jammu-Sialkot (via Suchetgarh).

f) In the entire disengaged area, Indo-Pak friendship parks and trade centres be set up.

g) On the vacated Siachen mountain, a jointly run Indo-Pak scientific research centre be established.

The third task should be that, in case of any future talks with New Delhi, Islamabad or with both, the united front should represent the viewpoint (if there is a consensus), or viewpoints (if there are differences) of all groups constituting the united front.

The fourth task should be to suggest a set of modalities for resolving Jammu-Kashmir problem. While preparing such a list, the united front may also think over the following model forms.

a) Rejecting of all military forms and adoption of a peaceful path by signing a No War pact for the resolution of Jammu-Kashmir problem.

b) Maintaining the unity and integrity of the three parties involved in the dispute, i.e., India, Pakistan and Jammu-Kashmir.

c) Discarding of all communal and divisive proposals.

d) Getting rid of all preconceived notions—like Jammu-Kashmir as an integral part of India or as the jugular vain of Pakistan.

e) Keeping in view the same genetic code of the people of India, Pakistan and Jammu-Kashmir.

f) Taking into account the similar current problems poverty, unemployment, illiteracy, etc.—faced by the people of the two countries.

g) And adopting the perspective of a common future for the people of India, Pakistan and Jammu-Kashmir.

Proceeding from the above modalities, the UF's fifth task should be to sort out a compromising solution to the problem of Jammu-Kashmir—a solution that reconciles the aspirations and the interests of the three parties concerned (i.e., India, Pakistan and Jammu-Kashmir), defends their respective national honour and opens for them the high gates of a prosperous future.

17-03-2004