

Document

Declaration at the India-Pakistan People's Solidarity Conference

The following Declaration was adopted at the India-Pakistan People's Solidarity Conference held in New Delhi, on July 12, 2001

The Declaration

I. Preamble:

For over half a century now, the people of India and Pakistan have borne the burden of hostilities between the two States. We, the representatives of numerous civil society groups which have endeavoured for years to reform relations between India and Pakistan, welcome the Summit between General Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and urge that they seriously engage in a sustained dialogue. The resources of the two countries must be transferred from bombs to books, from submarines to schools, from missiles to medicines, from frigates to food, from runways for bombers to railroads for people. The two leaders must also pledge to eliminate the terrifying nuclear menace that threatens the people of the entire South Asia region and the whole world.

II. The Pakistan-India People's Solidarity Conference has identified and arrived at an agreement on three major areas of concern between the two countries, which we feel need to be addressed at the Agra Summit. These are as follows:

Nuclear Weapons

The nuclear weapons programmes of India and Pakistan have heightened mutual tensions and placed the entire South Asian region in grave danger. The two countries must commit themselves to total nuclear weapons elimination in the world and to the complete dismantlement and destruction of their own nuclear armaments and associated systems, and jointly return to the agenda for global disarmament.

Democracy

We affirm that peace, democracy and justice are indivisible. Hostilities between India and Pakistan have dangerously fuelled religious fundamentalisms and national chauvinisms. The support extended to these forces by the Indian and Pakistani States seriously undermine democracy, the rights of working people, marginalised communities, minorities and women, and threaten intellectual freedom and free speech. We call for Pakistan's return to participatory democracy and representative rule based on the principles of non-exclusion of any section of society, respect for universal human rights and freedom, and speedy empowerment of the people. We also call for the strengthening of democracy in all parts of India to attain the same objectives. These acts are crucial for a lasting peace between the two countries. We call on the two leaders to recognise that today's needs and tomorrow's great possibilities are more important than yesterday's sad injuries, and that old mindsets need to change with the times.

Kashmir

The Kashmir issue is not only a territorial dispute between the two States but involves the people of Jammu and Kashmir (which includes Jammu, Kashmir, Gilgit, Baltistan, Muzzafarabad, Mirpur, and Ladakh). Therefore, a just and democratic resolution of the Kashmir dispute demands the involvement of the people on both sides of the LoC in a non-sectarian solution. A Kashmir solution can work only in the atmosphere of Pakistan-India friendship, which this Summit must guarantee.

For fifty-four years the governments of India and Pakistan have not only failed to resolve the Kashmir dispute, but have also been responsible for grave Human Rights violations. Let all sides reflect upon the tremendous suffering in Jammu and Kashmir caused by the denial of political, social, economic and human rights by India and Pakistan, therefore, full democratic and political rights must be granted to the people in all these areas. The Agra Summit should focus attention on the plight of the widows and half-widows, the orphans, the bodily wounded, the psychologically traumatised, the socially ostracised, and the physically uprooted—irrespective of religious, ethnic or political background.

III. We call on the two governments to:

1. Withdraw all draconian laws in both countries that violate Human Rights.
2. While we welcome all measures such as release of fisherfolk, easing of travel restrictions, this must be expanded to allow free movement of people between the two countries, and remove travel and visa restrictions, (including police reporting) through a formal agreement between the two governments.
3. Withdraw the order for prior Government permission and clearance to hold international meetings, conferences, seminars and workshops.
4. Lift restrictions on exchange of newspapers, magazines and journals, etc.
5. Normalise cultural and trade relations between the two countries.
6. Cease hostilities with immediate effect in Kashmir, initiate the process of disengagement of armed forces, and terminate support to armed groups, both State and non-State.
7. Involve the people of both sides of the LoC in finding a democratic, non-sectarian solution to the Kashmir problem.
8. Rehabilitate all those who have been affected by the war in Kashmir, particularly women, and create the conditions for the return of all refugees and exiles.
9. Commit to a Nuclear Freeze. This would entail no further nuclear testing, no development, deployment and induction of nuclear weapons, and no further efforts towards the setting up of Command and Control systems.
10. Take a principled stand against "missile defence" and for global nuclear restraint measures such as de-alerting and separation from warheads from missiles.

11. Develop a pacifist, non-militaristic, non-masculinist view of national security which would lead to a mutual reduction in the armed forces, and utilise the freed resources for meeting the people's social and economic needs. Both governments should also commit themselves to a time-bound programme for the systematic reduction of military spending, both direct and indirect.

12. Agree to complete transparency in their CBMs.

13. Cease all acts of subversion, overt or covert as well as hostile propaganda and media campaign against each other.

14. Demilitarise Siachen Glacier