

## **Agra Summit: A Foreign Policy Perspective**

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This paper examines the Indo-Pakistan summit at Agra and its inevitable failure from the perspective of foreign policy. It takes the position that the factors that are responsible for changes in foreign policy did not exist in relation to this summit. The outcome of this summit was bound to be an aborted one.

It might not perhaps have been wrong to be as optimistic as the US in the case of the Agra Summit since it has played its role in getting this summit on and through this re-starting the dialogue between the two countries. The Indian Government's view also has been that some understanding has come out of the Summit and it may lead to further understanding in future if subsequent developments build on these positive signs. The paper takes the position that the factors that are responsible for changes in foreign policy did not exist in relation to this summit. The outcome of this summit was bound to be an aborted one.

This however does not mean that there were no changes that could have had a bearing on it. I make here a distinction between foreign policy 'reorientation' and 'changes'. The former implies change of reorientation and indicates a paradigm shift. For example this may mean a shift from interdependence to isolation or self-reliance to dependence. In contrast, 'change' may indicate day-to-day changes but not a basic shift of policy. Yet there may be changes of the kind that may in the long run lead to a pragmatic shift, if sustained by deepening of the movement. These cumulative changes along with others in other aspects of the foreign policy: behaviour, signals, trade patterns, internal changes or external factors may bring about shift in policy. However, basically, in themselves these changes may have a short duration of existence. The paper seeks to take the position that reorientation is possible if there are changes in the external or internal factors[1] and that the persistence of strategic history and strategic considerations are the causes of the outcome of the summit more than anything else. Very little of the new levels of dialogue warranting a further turning point within the framework of interdependence theory is available. The paper is not taking the position that this should not have happened. It is taking the position that this could have been the only result; that a neo-realist perspective is more relevant than a neo-liberal one. Both the Neo-realists and the theorists of interdependence recognise the centrality of conflict in international relations. The difference between the two is over the issue of its resolution. The Neo-realists focus on war while the interdependence theorists overstress on means other than war for conflict resolution.

### **Lack of conducive internal change**

Expectation of change in the course of Indo-Pakistan relations were articulated by intellectuals known to be closer to P. M. Vajpayee. Sondhi and Kapur said 'Vajpayee initiative

must be welcomed as a new and sound Indo-Pakistani architecture.’ They expected that a low key dialogue could take place where the firings on the LOC could stop. Both pinned their hopes on the domestic compulsions of Vajpayee and Musharraf and the interest of the Bush administration[2]. These changes were not significant. Even these authors agreed in a subsequent article that there was vacuum in US policy and Chinese hostility as expressed through Sushma Swaraj’s role that made the summit a failure. We take the position that the history of the subcontinent and lack of internal and external change led to the impasse. Whatever changes and compulsions were there at that point of time were too weak to effect a change. There was no reorientation of foreign policy change in India and Pakistan. There was no internal change indicating internal desires of a new relationship between the two countries. Vajpayee’s and Musharraf’s aspirations for breaking with history were not rooted in either a change in the course of events or a change in the strategic environment nor perhaps in their motivations that meant going in for any new direction in their policies.

Such foreign policy reorientation in India towards Pakistan is not on the cards for the factors for the same do not exist. There were no changes in the trade pattern of the two countries. There were no internal movements seeking a realignment of relations to enhance peace and friendship except an incipient Track-II diplomacy that is an unsubstantive variant of Track-I diplomacy. There was no desire currently to engage in self-reliance or be a dependent country as far as India is concerned. In fact, the directions of change as far as India is concerned, as indicated so far, are towards integration into the processes of globalisation or what can be summed up as ‘hegemony of the unipolar moment’, or, from a different perspective, economic integration with the world market. The concern for economic integration brings to the fore the perspectives of interdependence rather than underline the neo-realist strong beat of conflict in international relations that South Asian security complex reflects. The change that has taken place in India and Pakistan is that the two countries have changed into dictatorship of General Musharraf in Pakistan and a revivalist democracy of Prime Minister Vajpayee in India, respectively. In India the right wing within the NDA Government had greater assertion of bringing about no change, as was subsequently reflected by the interventions of the Information Minister Sushma Swaraj at the behest of the Home Minister L. K. Advani. Vajpayee had been involved in international parleys, especially diplomacy with the aim of having proximity with the US. It appears these two aspects of change were not enough as far as India was concerned. In Pakistan, the Jamaat-e-Islami and other right wing forces had opposed General Musharraf’s idea of talking to India and the Pakistani President had to stop them in their tracks. The processes of coming closer to the USA and the domestic political change were not enough for a vision of interdependence to develop.

Despite this, General Musharraf favoured the idea of making a break with history and with reference to his then impending visit to India, he said “I am sure my counterparts in India... will also show open-mindedness and this time we will change history”[3]. Vajpayee’s new vision was thus reported. “The most important thing for the PM right now, they stressed, is “to put over 50 years of hostility, suspicion and mistrust behind us, to turn a new leaf, to focus on the future, to strive single mindedly for peace and prosperity in the entire region.”[4]

## **External environment**

This fact of internal change coincides with changes in the external environment in the shape of emergence of U.S. hegemony after the end of the cold war and the operation of the Clinton doctrine. This doctrine of “humanitarian intervention had two parts: the use of force on behalf of universal values instead of the narrower national interests or which sovereign states have traditionally fought; and, in defense of those values, military intervention in the internal affairs of sovereign states rather than mere opposition to cross border aggression, as in the case of Gulf War of 1991”[5]. The first meant that the Alliance did not protect Kosovars because they only bombarded the region. The second meant that it was illegal since it had no UN authorization. In the U.S., successive presidential establishments since the collapse of the Cold War have regarded Kashmir’s accession to India as disputed. Clinton informed the Indian parliament about this US position. The US administrations on earlier occasions have also taken this position. Senior Bush had even called India a ‘rogue state’. With India and Pakistan going nuclear the U.S. had imposed sanctions on India. Since the collapse of the Soviet Union India was constrained to adjust to the new situation. To put it briefly, the post cold war phase meant loss of maneuverability and realisation of constraints vis-à-vis the U.S.

The collapse of the Soviet Union had meant the collapse of the framework of India’s foreign policy.[6] The emergence of the coalition Governments in the 1990s meant certain haziness in India’s response to the fast and bewildering changes in the international environment as well as an emerging consciousness of the need to adjust. Among the coalition partners were parties like the BJP that had spit fire against the Congress Party on its Non Alignment policy as well as its handling of the issues like Kashmir. In his notes on Foreign policy the present Minister of External Affairs, Jaswant Singh had said that the Indian blunders in history have led to political anomie and war in J&K, the Indian attitude to the Chinese move in Tibet, the war of 1962, wars with Pakistan in 1965 and 1971[7]. The long cherished desire to go West in foreign policy could now be fulfilled since the Congress history was being jettisoned and the BJP was becoming the dominant coalition partner. The logic of economic liberalisation was however continued by the BJP. Yet the emerging Indo-US bonhomie was punctuated by such acts as the Pokharan-II. The Western response to post nuclear South Asia was to treat the Kashmir issue as a dangerous flashpoint and pressurize the two countries to cap and contain, if not altogether eliminate, their existing nuclear programmes.

It is against the general perception that there has been an upswing in the Indo-US relations during the NDA Government’s phase that one needs to view the Agra summit. It may not be true that the invitation to Musharraf was given specifically under the pressure from the US. It cannot however be ignored that the Indo-US relations were now being driven by Indian willingness to support the US attempts on the National Missile Defense project. Though this has no published base it appears that the Indo-US informal parleys had created conditions for giving an invitation to Musharraf. To give Agra Summit a sweep of bigger time span it would only be more accurate to say that this was the product of the efforts of the Coalition Governments of Gujral and Vajpayee in India and the Nawaz Sharief Government in Pakistan.[8] We turn to the discussion on the Agra summit and note its inevitable result owing to one interpretation of history that did not fit with the visionary in the Indo-Pakistan diplomacy linked with the summit at Agra, i.e., Musharraf’s interpretation did not quite tally with the realist vision of Vajpayee.

## Metaphysics of Peace

The parleys at the Agra summit were marked by metaphysics that any vision of peace could sidestep considerations of security that in turn has a military rationale. The speech of the President of India at the banquet and the plenary speech of the P.M. had their share of this vision of fight against poverty and interdependence. The President quoted Nehru and Jinnah on the need for cooperation and peace. He said “...may I give expression to the hope of our people that your visit, on any reckoning a historic one, will open a new chapter in the relations between our two countries that will enable us to walk together on the high road of peace and friendship to our common goal of progress and prosperity.”[9] In his invitation letter the Prime Minister of India had said again metaphysically, “Our common enemy is poverty. For the welfare of our peoples, there is no other recourse but a pursuit of the path of reconciliation, of engaging in productive dialogue and by building trust and confidence.”[10] Further, in his opening Statement, at the Plenary of the India-Pakistan Summit, July 15, 2001 Vajpayee said, “We should respond not only to our immediate need for peace and progress for our peoples but also to an international environment that increasingly stresses inter-dependence and cooperation over conflict and discord.”(*Strategic Digest*, Vol.XXXI, Number 8, August 2001, p. 1040).

It only needs to be pointed out here that the theorists of interdependence do not say that there will be no conflict even in the world of interdependence. They said, “In analyzing the politics of interdependence, we emphasized that interdependence would not necessarily lead to cooperation nor did we assume that its consequences would automatically be benign in other respects.”[11] The theory focuses on linkage through engagement on issues at the stage of what they describe as complex interdependence. The focus of the theory is linkage with an issue approach to international politics. They themselves admit that they had failed to analyze the matter of issue-based linkage. To be more specific the theory looks at institutional arrangements to mitigate anarchy that the neorealists believe inevitably leads to war. So both deal with anarchy—one in a Hobbesian and the other in a Lockean way.[12] Subsequent debate over the issue with the fall of the Soviet Union has shown that conflict over economic gains is conceded by the theorists of inter-dependence. Perhaps in keeping with this theory the P.M. of India meant that there could be a structure of dialogue that could be both composite and also look at issues of cooperation. But this vision had to give way to the neo-realist argument of Musharraf that strategic concerns over Kashmir need to be settled. Strategic conflicts have rarely been solved by diplomacy. During the inter-war period, the then British Prime Minister Chamberlain had returned from Munich saying that he had brought peace. That did not happen. During the same period all the conferences on Disarmament did not deliver anything since everybody was preparing for war. Agra appears to be no place for such a settlement.

The statements of the Prime minister and the President reflect the earlier phase of India’s foreign policy that was still fresh with the birthmarks of the vision of peace and friendship born out of the freedom struggle. These were soon tainted by the realpolitik of war in J&K and its subsequent turbulence till date, especially after 1989 apart from the wars that India and Pakistan have so far fought. Karan Singh said in the Indian Parliament, “Ever since Independence, Pakistan has made one attempt after the other to break Kashmir away from India....The point I am making is that, because of this historical background, it was very clear to us that the Agra summit would also willy nilly fail”.[13] Not only the past but also the current policies of the

Government of India at the economic level do not allow for humanitarian considerations of removal of poverty at national or subcontinental level. These also do not reflect upon the fact that integration at economic level with the market mechanism of the current era of globalisation is not leading to poverty alleviation either in Pakistan or in India. The Indian State in both the phases of its liberalisation policies shows evidence of intervention to slow that process rather than hasten it. In Pakistan the period of Islamic socialism under Zulfikar Ali Bhutto has been jettisoned and Pakistan economy is extremely dependent on Western aid.

The acceptance of the Prime Minister's invitation by General Musharraf was followed by his assumption of the office of the President. He consolidated his political position before coming to India. That this changeover meant anything by way of change impinging on Pakistan's Kashmir policy is no body's belief. There was nothing on the ground that suggested the emergence of a new realism that could give a new vision. The new realism now focuses on global integration and not fission of the earlier era. On the contrary at least in this country President Musharraf is known as the architect of Kargil war. It is suggested that the Vajpayee Government also wanted some success for domestic purposes. Neither the invitation nor the summit obliged the Government on that score. The preceding events do not lend credence to such a vision being rooted in reality. The failure of the cease-fire announcements, the failure of talks with the Hizb, the discovery that the Hurriyat had no representative character by K.C. Pant and the negation of Lahore declaration by Kargil do not lead to any poetic vision. They do however take one back to brass-tracks of strategy. Even on that count the refusal of Pakistan to have DGMO level talks prior to the summit were indications that the vision will remain in the dream world. Not that there is anything wrong with the vision. Only that it had no base in ground reality except in the general way of a peasant's desire to live in harmony and plenty. It is more in the nature of Gandhi's dreams of 'Ram Rajya'. But Gandhi deployed that metaphor to mobilize the peasantry against the British colonial rule. We need to know why did we deploy this vision. Was it to wean away some segments of the masses of Pakistan from the "jihadi" consciousness against India?

The expectation from this summit was not a breakthrough that could undo previous history. The expectation was that the process of dialogue could be restored which had been ruptured by the Kargil war and the internal changes in the Pakistan polity. The Indian side had wished for the establishment of a structured process of dialogue on the basis of the Shimla summit and the Lahore declaration. Shimla summit had held that disputes need to be settled bilaterally. Lahore declaration aimed at discussion on all issues of dispute, including on Kashmir. During the period of Gujral's Prime Ministership subject-wise discussion groups had been set up. Against this backdrop, in order for any summit to show results, either internal or external changes had to be phenomenal as they were with the 'New Thinking' of Gorbachev in foreign policy and 'Perestroika' at home, which put an end to cold war. Such signs did not exist on the ground as far as India and Pakistan were concerned.

This was not the case even in the Track-II diplomacy. Summits succeed with substantial results after a war. The history of summits since the treaty of Augsburg through Westphalia, Versailles and to Potsdam show that a new structure of peace and dialogue are so established. The Kargil war was not of the nature that could have produced such a situation. Even the Shimla agreement that took place in the context of the 1971 war between India and Pakistan could not guarantee conversion of the LOC as the new international border despite the assurances that Bhutto had

given to Mrs. Gandhi verbally. Without any change in the ground reality, restoration of a dialogue perhaps was a realistic hope. Even this limited aim could not be achieved. The reasons lie in the history of Indo-Pakistan relations.

### **Historical Imperative: Fundamental Fracture**

Both India and Pakistan are yet to arrive at the vision of Good neighbourliness in spite of sharing half-a-century of relationship of distrust and hostility. Musharraf claimed he was making history by raising the Kashmir issue for the first time in the history of Pakistan's diplomacy with India. This was the answer he gave to a question in the Press conference that he addressed in Pakistan after the Agra summit. One of the participants in the Indian delegation to the Shimla summit, P.N. Dhar also informs us that Bhutto was not interested in talking about the solution of Kashmir at Shimla because of the 'Lahore Lobby' and the 'Army'. [14] In the same interview Musharraf also said that the Lahore declaration could not guide him since that declaration also did not focus primarily on Kashmir. The Lahore Declaration had committed India and Pakistan to a dialogue on all issues, including on Kashmir. Further he pooh-poohed the questioner who suggested that Kashmir was the core of Indian nationhood's secular credentials. This was taking him back to Jinnah's 'Two Nation theory'. It was his reading of history.

The statement of the Prime minister in the Parliament brings out that he took the following position at Agra. In response to the discussion in the Parliament, Vajpayee referred to history at its initial phase to refer to how Pakistan had taken Kashmir now under it. He said that he was astonished to hear from General Musharraf "...that if they would not have launched the tribal invasion, they could not have secured the part of Kashmir lying under their occupation today." Further he went down the history lane. He spoke about his parleys with Musharraf. He pointed out that Musharraf "...insisted on the centrality of the Kashmir issue, we will be forced to go into the pages of history and see how one third of Kashmir was illegally occupied by Pakistan and how a part of it was gifted to China and that there was no democracy in occupied Kashmir." [15] In fact, the P.M. told the Pakistani President that if he talked of the rightness of the tribal invasion "where was the basis of negotiations".

One notices that the Indian side had raised all the issues of history as well as reiterated the resolution of the Indian Parliament that "Pakistan must vacate the areas of the Indian State of Jammu and Kashmir, which they have occupied through aggression." [16] Minister of External Affairs, Jaswant Singh, went to the extent of talking about a fundamental fracture while speaking in the Rajya Sabha thus "...Pakistan pursues compulsive hostility and perpetual hostility because it had adopted the *two nation theory* which we cannot accept. *This is the fundamental fracture, which can be repaired if the people of India and Pakistan relate to each other.*" [17] (Italics mine)

### **Pre-summit Build up of the historical imperative**

The construct of historical imperative could not be construed post facto to explain away to the Opposition the results of the Summit. The close look at the initial phase of the pre-summit parleys had enough signs of it. At the All Parties Conference that the Prime Minister called on the eve of the Summit, this had cropped up. As reported the P.M. said to the meeting, "For us

Kashmir is not a religious issue. It is linked to India's unity and integrity. We have never believed in the Two Nation Theory"[18] Much before the summit, strident rhetoric emanated from each of the countries and the PM's telephonic conversation with Musharraf highlighted the need to tone this down.[19]

Both the foreign ministers of the two countries were engaged in underlining their different positions on the process of preparing for the summit as well as on the agenda of the summit. India wanted a composite dialogue and Pakistan did not disclose its approach to the talks at the summit till the last. Its approach, later described by the Indian foreign minister, as 'uni-focal' was not available in its full blast. Secondly going by what Jaswant Singh told the Indian Parliament about preparations the Indian proposal for having a structure of dialogue as well as an agenda for dialogue had no positive response. On June 20, 2002 the Pakistan Foreign Minister, Abdus Sattar informed the Press that he hoped that at the next meeting between General Musharraf and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee, the two leaders would 'address this issue ( Kashmir issue) in a positive manner.'[20] Five days before this General Musharraf unfolded what he meant by changing history. He believed that focus on Kashmir was necessary. He said "I agree with you that there has been no progress on the Kashmir issue in the past. I hope it would be different this time and, hopefully, we would change history."[21]

The pre-summit preparations also floundered as far as India was concerned since the Pakistan side was not interested in the steps that India was suggesting. Jaswant Singh said that despite the Indian efforts to set an agenda and lay down contours of the dialogue, the Pakistani side did not agree to this. Even when President Musharraf was in Delhi he maintained a studied silence about the talks in Agra and did not oblige the journalists with any indication of what he was going to do. His visits to Gandhi Samadhi and to his ancestral home, Naherwali Haveli, in the walled city, or meeting with the Hurriyat leaders in the Pakistani embassy were no signs of rereading history that could have led to a thaw in diplomatic moves.

India focused on the Tashkent and Shimla agreements as well as the Lahore document. These were from Musharraf's reading of history a case of pre-history since they did not reflect the Pakistani unfinished agenda of partition, i.e., of integrating Kashmir into Pakistan. This should not have been surprising to the Indian diplomats since the Tashkent and Shimla agreements were products of Pakistan's failure on the battlefield. Lahore declaration was signed at the time when preparations for Kargil was going on. Secondly for Musharraf to accede to a document that was signed by his ousted predecessor was also unthinkable. The Shimla and Lahore declarations had not raised the issue of Kashmir primarily. They had mentioned Kashmir as one of the issues among other contentious issues. The Opposition Parties in India had impressed upon the Government in the joint meeting that he should impress upon the Pakistanis that Shimla and Agra documents were significant.

Vajpayee's attempt to create a congenial environment by announcing concessions was bound to have no impact on the General. His announcement on relaxation of trade restrictions, establishing people to people contacts, announcing educational opportunities for studies in India by Pakistan's youth and other humanitarian measures like easing problems related to the grant of visas did not attract any meaningful response. Nor did the Indian announcement of Confidence Building Measures (CBMS) have any meaning for Pakistan. That was one reason that partial

steps for this were not acceptable. Even the offer of the DGMOs of the two countries to meet was not responded to. And when the response to the diplomatic talk of confidence building measures came up, it came as a stunning blow from General Musharraf at the breakfast meeting he had with the journalists. He made the solution of the Kashmir issue as the biggest confidence building measure impinging on other issues. He said in this meeting unless India acknowledged that Kashmir was the main issue of contention between the two countries, no progress could be made. "If we do not face issues squarely, catch the bull by the horns, if we don't put the horse before the cart, we cannot move forward." He further said "Talk of moving forward on trade, economy, culture, while you are killing each other suggests a make-believe world".[22]

We notice that both India and Pakistan were in their own ways stressing on history. India was reiterating it while general Musharraf was readdressing himself to the diluted cause of theory of the Two Nation theory. History was overtaking metaphysics.

### **Contemporary reality**

If one looks at the history of Kashmir one finds that in October 1947, to the history of Kashmir dispute were added two more factors— one old and one new. The old factor was the attempt to destabilise Kashmir from outside by sending infiltrators since 1947. To this was added in 1989 the game of proxy war through the induction of terror tactics. In the Pakistani parlance this became a freedom struggle and for India this became cross border terrorism. The second issue was the overt nuclearisation of Pakistan after the Pokharan-II explosions by India in 1998. The issue of nuclear South Asia was a new and far more deadly issue. This is so in terms of lethality of weapons of mass destruction, risks involved in the management of nuclear weapons once in place and the burden of a nuclear arms race. The fact that the peoples of the two countries live now with the realisation that the region may be a new nuclear battlefield and this would warrant a declaration on security concerns so as to avoid the use of nuclear weapons. In this sense Natwar Singh's position that this became a core issue assumes poignancy in terms of the existential reality impinging on the other aspect of cross border terrorism. In this sense, Natwar Singh called it the core issue that needed to be addressed at the summit He was also voicing the international concerns.[23]

The preparations for the summit did not include any of these issues since there was no agenda. The Pakistan side had rejected the Lahore declaration, which mentioned the nuclear issue. It said "Recognizing that the nuclear dimension of the security environment of the two countries adds to their responsibility for avoidance of conflict between the two countries....an environment of peace and security is in the supreme national interest of both sides and that the resolution of all outstanding issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, is essential for this purpose." In the nuclear field any number of CBMs can be thought of and some have been suggested by India but with no response from the other side. Further in the time of 'near war' in Kargil, India refrained from crossing the border only in recognition of the fact that the region was nuclearised. It is reported that the Government withstood all pressures to cross the LOC.[24] It must be noticed here that this had never happened before in the wars that the two countries had fought. So the fallout of going nuclear on India's strategy needs to be carefully analysed for future battles, if at all.



## Issues raised at the Summit

Security has a military and a scientific rationale unlike that of peace. It is here that the Agra summit, in terms of issues discussed, was the weakest. There is no evidence to suggest that there was a discussion of the impossibility of fighting and winning a nuclear war. After the arrival of Musharraf, the meetings that the leaders had with him do not give any indication of this. Second the P.M. informed the Parliament about the issues that he raised with the Pakistan's President. These were significant issues but not related to the nuclear question. The issues he raised were: the fifty four Prisoners of War in Pakistan's jails, extradition of known terrorists and criminals given sanctuary in Pakistan, the upkeep of the Sikh gurudwaras and Hindu temples in Pakistan, the treatment of Indian pilgrims visiting shrines in Pakistan and enhancement of beneficial trade. Except the last one these are all very significant issues related to history but not to security. The issue of trade is linked with the non-military threats. The issue of the nuclear and conventional CBMs was raised but they were not specified and so it is difficult to know the nature of the security scenario that would emerge after Agra.

Take a leaf out of U.S.-Soviet diplomacy on the nuclear issue at the Geneva Summit in 1985. The issue of nuclear security at least could have been addressed. India could have asserted the position that the nuclear weapons are not weapons of war, that a nuclear war cannot be fought and won, that there would be a no first use and that for considerable time in the future the nuclear targeting would exclude civilian populations of the two countries. On the security issue the summit seemed to be on the weakest wicket. The only issue that is linked with security and with the nuclear issue indirectly is the issue of the ongoing bloodbath in the J&K. This is one issue that became as contentious as the issue of discussing Kashmir. It is these two issues that clouded the possibility of any positive outcome from the summit. The pre-summit meetings that the Indian home Minister had with the visiting dignitary raised the issue of known terrorists being given sanctuary in Pakistan. Very important from the point of view of cross border terrorism if put in a perspective at the summit rather than as a pre-summit demand. The P.M. of India said, "owing to the Pakistani insistence on J&K settlement as a precondition for *normalisation of relations bridging of differences on other issues were given up*.[25] (italics mine)

Perhaps the goal of normalisation was not possible. In diplomacy surely lesser goals can be aimed at. Relaxation could be one through the establishment of a structure of a dialogue. Status quo is another if not status quo ante. If not a joint statement a joint press conference where positive aspects of agreements could be brought out may have been more helpful in lightening the burden of gloom that had engulfed the Summit. One wonders if a nuanced position on such goals of the summit were worked out at-least on our side. In his reply to the Rajya Sabha, Jaswant Singh said that the criticism that preparations were not made was not correct. He does not however tell us if such nuanced issues had been considered by the Ministry of External Affairs either before or during the summit. One is raising this aspect of semantics also because it is learnt that the discussion on what is the core or critical issue was a question of semantics. Kashmir issue was the core for Pakistan and for India it was cross-border terrorism. Core or critical were the words from the kitty of semantics. One could add to normalisation the word relaxation as a prelude. Kashmir and terrorism in Kashmir are parts of history and it is these that were the dominant themes at the summit. The lack of a way out from the impasse led to the outcome that caused divisions among the parties in Parliament though they had supported the

unilateral invitation to Musharraf. Both Vajpayee and Musharraf, who wanted to make history by reiterating history, remained confined in the travails of the history of the two nations— one secular and the other a confessional theocratic one.

### **Summit in the Parliament**

Across the board there was disappointment with the outcome of the summit. For the opposition this was predictable and for others this was the product of the intransigence of the Pakistan side. For the Opposition this was predictable since preparations for it had not been made. For the Government this was a failure but for the Government there was the possibility of further dialogue since Indian side could have an idea of both the President's mindset as well some understanding between the two had been reached. The issues relating to the summit raised in the Parliament were; (a) if pressure was exercised by a foreign power to hold the summit; (b) were sufficient preparations for the summit made (c) was there a division within the government at Agra? (d) Wasn't this a failure?

Mulayam Singh of Samajwadi Party raised the issue of foreign pressure and lack of preparations and considered the summit a failure.[26] The government said that there was no pressure exercised by any one. Rather there was support to the summit in the desires of the people of the two countries, the countries of south Asia wanted this as well as there was international support for it.

Madhav Rao Scindia of the Congress Party raised the issue in the Lok Sabha. The interventions by most of the speakers of the Opposition showed again the spectre of history raising its head on the issue of Kashmir, the illegal occupation of Kashmir and the relevant question of the nuclear confidence building measures was raised by him apart from the issue of pre-summit preparations. The issue raised by him was with regard to the issues and level of understanding. Scindia asked 'let us know the areas of agreement and the areas of disagreement.'[27] In the Rajya Sabha, Karan Singh (quoted above) raised the issue of history to say that the failure of the summit was inevitable.

Kapil Sibal and R. L. Bhatia, both from the Congress Party raised a question in the Lok Sabha that related to change in foreign policy. Sibal said 'Pakistani mindset has not changed for the last fifty years, and there is no expectation that their mindset would change.'[28] R. L. Bhatia raised the issue of change in the Lok Sabha thus: 'When you want to change your policy, you may be aware that it has to be based on a national consensus....' He further asked 'Was there any indication from the... talks that Pakistan has changed its mind and that they are ready to come to the table with an open mind and have a dialogue with us?' Like others from his party he went into the history and ideology of Pakistan polity and its differences from India. He blamed the Government for ignoring this history and thus he felt the talks had failed.[29] On the current issues they wanted to know if cross border terrorism was sufficiently raised and if the issue of vacating Pakistani occupation of part of Kashmir had been raised?

In his statement the P.M. said, 'I conveyed in clear terms that India has resolve, strength and stamina to counter terrorism and violence until it is decisively crushed. I want to reiterate this determination today on the floor of this House.'[30] In his intervention, he responded to the

Opposition criticism that the summit had failed. In his response he said that in her meeting with him, Mrs. Sonia Gandhi, the President of the Congress Party, had insisted that the Shimla Agreement and the Lahore Declaration should be given priority in his talks with Musharraf. This is what he had precisely done. So once again we notice that owing to Musharraf's insistence on Kashmir, the Indian Prime Minister had to reiterate past history which was did not quite go well with his metaphysical desires of peace and poverty alleviation. It is worthwhile to mention here that in January 2001, in his musings from Kumarakom in Kerala, the P.M. had acknowledged Kashmir problem as a 'legacy of the past' and had said: "In our search for a lasting solution to the Kashmir problem, both in its *external and internal dimensions*, we shall not traverse solely on the beaten track of the past. Rather, we shall be bold and innovative designers of a future architecture of peace and prosperity for the entire South Asian region. In this search, the sole light that will guide us is our commitment to peace, justice and the vital interests of the nation." (Italics mine).[32] However, Agra Summit showed that the issue was so much mired in the past that it will require not only innovativeness but also mindsets on both sides to approach the problem from a pragmatic point of view.

However, the Foreign minister and the P.M. replied to the issue of whether the summit was a failure but they were not able to spell out the understanding that had been reached between the two sides. This was the demand of the opposition. Here the issue of working on a joint draft and corrections in this were raised. Jaswant Singh informed the Parliament '... Pakistan pursues compulsive hostility and perpetual hostility, because it had adopted the two nation theory which we cannot accept'.[33]

The debate in Parliament did not show a way out of this grim scenario since the speakers who otherwise represent track-II diplomacy stuck to the argument of history. Kuldeep Nayyar, who described the summit as positive had this to say on substantive issue: P. M. must have 'conveyed to Pakistan that as far as this problem (Kashmir) is concerned, it will never be settled on the basis of religion.' Further he supported the P.M. on the issue of cross border terrorism. He suggested that further steps could be taken to create a conducive atmosphere, like removing the ban on newspapers and books unilaterally and allowing the intelligentsia from Pakistan to come to India for creating good will.[34]

## **Conclusion**

The difference between the two sides was on whether the summit was a failure or not but not on whether the dialogue should continue or not. There seems to be no difference on that issue. The problem however is how to move out of the impasse of ideology and history. If change is desired then the internal and external changes are not of the magnitude that would make start some 'New Thinking'. Before becoming PMs, I. K. Gujral and Vajpayee had been foreign ministers of India and had expressed their desire to change the course of history in the subcontinent. The Gujral doctrine that came when Gujral was the P.M. was based on unilateral steps for winning over the leaders and peoples of South Asia. This had been evolved in consultation with Brajesh Mishra, who is also playing a leading role in policy-formation at the moment. The present Prime Minister also expressed similar attitude when he unilaterally announced steps before the Agra summit. In the Parliament Kuldeep Nayar also recommended such an approach. This does not appear to be enough. Nor is there enough in words from these

leaders to show their vision of South Asia and friendly Indo-Pakistan Relations. The people to people relations are too weak on issues of nuclear strategy, human rights, common trade practices or seeking fundamental change that will bridge fundamental fractures in South Asia.

The international environment may witness changes that may or may not bring about a substantial change in this matter. The attack on the World Trade Centre Towers and on Pentagon and the fall out of the war on terrorism may spin a diplomatic churning the results of which need only to be awaited as far as the external environment is concerned. President George Bush has already indicated that the American efforts and the support they are getting in their war effort from Pakistan may not have a beneficial impact on Kashmir. The results must be awaited, but with an abated breath. A lot of bloodshed, destruction of property in this impending dance of death in our neighbourhood will have its own negative causal effect in the long run.

The American actions in Afghanistan may have dangerous ramifications for India, China and Russia other than Pakistan in strategic terms. In this sense the attempt at introducing an element of mutual interdependence between India and Pakistan will have a knock on the head and so will peace efforts in South Asia. Since long the Indian position has been that the regional conflict in South Asia cannot be divorced from the extra-regional factors theorised as 'regional complex' by Barry Buzan.[35]

### Endnotes

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