

KASHMIR ISSUE: THE SOFT APPROACH

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Abstract

Kashmir issue is considered as an issue which could have far-reaching implications for the security of not only this region but entire international community. The complexity of this issue is unique due to its multi-dimensional character which is rooted in the socio-economic changes being brought about by the phenomenon of Globalization. This article analyses facts from shifts in the international system during the past 23 years to the increasing role of Kashmiri diaspora. It dilates upon the disparity in the quality of life of the Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control and recent changes in the political structure of both Azad Jammu and Kashmir and the Indian-held Kashmir. Therefore, it is imperative that for any realistic solution or way forward of the Kashmir issue would have to account for the changing environment. Such a comprehensive and broad-based approach would allow Pakistan's Kashmir Policy to be synergized with Pakistan's other vital national interests, diversify policy options and also improve its international image.

Introduction

In the prevailing sympathetic international environment towards New Delhi, is combined with relatively compromising diplomatic standing of Pakistan and dynamic nature of the Kashmir polity, an immediate solution of Kashmir issue (acceptable both to the Kashmiri people and Indian polity) seems unlikely in the foreseeable future. Therefore, cognizant of the changing international and regional environment, Pakistan should review its traditional state-centric approach towards Kashmir accordingly should aim at pursuing a people-centric approach towards the resolution of the Kashmir imbroglio. This would

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bring about an immediate , long-term resolution, making it 9both feasible for Pakistan and acceptable to the Kashmiri people.

Basically from the Realist paradigm, the onus is on the state of Pakistan to reach out to the Kashmiri people and be seen as guarantor of a superior quality of life to them than the one Kashmiris are currently leading either on their own or what otherwise India could offer or promise them.

Firmly etched in history, religion, culture and geography, the Kashmiris thus far, have successfully maintained their distinct identity, based on their unique characteristics. While on one hand it is reasonable to expect that the values would not change in the foreseeable future; on the other hand, this is too ambitious to be a realistic expectation that Kashmiris will continue challenging Indian occupation indefinitely. Therefore, Pakistan should attempt to transform its traditional approach towards the Kashmiri issue by honoring its promises to the Kashmiri people.

The Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) negotiated between India and Pakistan offer the Pakistani government and its people, an unprecedented opportunity to reach out to the Kashmiri people, living under the occupation of the world's fourth-largest armed forces, deployed by the world's largest democracy, India. Through the CBMs, Pakistan can attempt to expand its own political, social-economic and ideological acceptability and space within IHK. It would be a ray of hope for the Kashmiris to not only improve their quality of life but also to maintain their distinct identity, in an environment of freedom and liberty, instead of suppression and coercive laws.

Ironically, India has increasingly become an important strategic ally (trading weapons and exchanging training) of U.S.A. from whom Islamabad expects diplomatic assistance in the peaceful resolution of Kashmir dispute. The US views New Delhi as its fast emerging strategic partner, and one of its largest markets for promoting both its own traditional and non-traditional security interests. As regional security paradigm dictates, managing the Kashmir dispute should be clearly in the U.S. interests due to its potential for crisis escalation with far reaching implications. But resolving it would probably not be in the U.S. economic and strategic interests, as countering Chinese rise is a greater U.S. interest as compared to resolving the Indo-Pak dispute. The sustained deficit of trust between India, Pakistan and China diversifies Washington's options, both in terms of geo-political considerations, and of course lucrative arms sales prospects, which would otherwise not be available to the US, in case of the resolution of the Kashmir dispute.

A Soft-Power Approach towards the Kashmir Issue: Multi-dimensional Prospects of a Peaceful Resolution

In the backdrop of 21st century, there is a need to adopt a comprehensive multi-dimensional soft-power approach towards resolution of the Kashmir issue.

The Global Dimension

Considering the prevailing structure of the international system, in the backdrop of Indo-U.S. strategic partnership, and generally unfavorable political environment towards non-state actors, a societal approach towards the Kashmiri imbroglio is essential.

This would be tantamount to retaining certain features of Pakistan's policy and approach towards Kashmir, whilst changing some of its variables and their employment in a comprehensive reorientation of the entire strategy. This implies that Pakistan should continue to uphold its principled stand towards a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir Issue, in accordance with the wishes and rights of the Kashmiris.

This will allow Pakistan to sustain its moral position at all level of international hierarchy (such as the UN Security Council and General Assembly) at a time when the international image needs to be improved, and use of force at any rung of the escalatory ladder could lead to further international isolation. Such a scenario could even involve UNSC resolutions under Chapter 7, onerous to Pakistan's national, regional and global interests. Even the Chinese diplomatic support should not be over-estimated beyond what they perceive as their own national interests under transformed international realpolitik. The Kargil crisis during 1999 was a case in point in this context, during which China also emphasized the need to resolve the conflict bilaterally and peacefully.¹

Other factors which further constrain Pakistan's foreign policy options regarding Kashmir must also be considered, which include that the Pakistani state has neither succeeded in reducing its external economic dependence on foreign aid and donations, nor has it been able to enlarge or diversify its export markets, or rectify its burgeoning energy crisis which further leads to enhanced external economic dependence.

Therefore, Islamabad should restructure its traditional approach towards Kashmir beyond the confines and scope of the policy elites of the two countries, who have traditionally focused on hard power, military deployments and formal interactions between the foreign offices. Now the main thrust of Pakistan's peace initiative must be reoriented away from the policy elite towards the Kashmiri people, pursuing a people to people based approach. The Kashmiris should be given the opportunities to develop strong family, cultural, ideological, economic, educational and trading bonds across the LoC.

¹ P.R. Chari, Pervez Iqbal Cheema and Stephen P. Cohen, *Four Crisis and a Peace Process* (New Delhi: Harper Collins, 2008), 123.

What must be realized is the fact that currently only a symbolic, very limited and controlled interaction is underway between the Kashmiris on both sides of the LoC. The major thrust of the CBM process is aimed at reducing the traditional acrimony between the Indian and Pakistani societies, which reflects a conflict management approach instead of a conflict resolution approach.

This opportunity can also be translated into greater degree of sympathy from the Kashmiri people towards the Pakistani state and nation. Under the prevailing international environment, use of force at any level of the escalatory ladder would be counter-productive in a bilateral context. Even if it is successful on the tactical level, the current international environment, Pakistan's domestic situation and external financial dependence impose serious limitations on Islamabad's ability to translate those tactical gains into tangible and sustainable strategic, political and diplomatic victories.

Therefore, any possible Kashmiri solution should, at this time, be approached not as a zero-sum game which is why a people-centric approach, rooted in efficient employment of Soft-power over long-term would be more result-oriented instead of a military-centric and state-centric short-term approach, towards a peaceful resolution of the Kashmir issue.

The Diplomatic Dimension

The U.S.-Afghan end-game and expected draw-down of the U.S. forces by the year 2014², offers enormous but time constrained opportunities for Pakistan. The sustained pressure from Washington on Islamabad vis-à-vis the Afghan end-game demonstrates its significance for the U.S. interests and highlights its political necessity to be presented as a victory before the U.S. voters for the current U.S. administration to be able to win another term in the White House.

Islamabad should also use its leverage in Afghanistan over Washington to push New Delhi towards re-invigorating and accelerating the process of composite dialogue and CBMs between Islamabad and New Delhi.³ This leverage over the U.S. is available only till U.S. is engaged in pursuing its regional interests in South Asia.

In this case, Pakistan should proactively pursue those CBMs which allow it to expand its own political and economic space in Indian-held Kashmir (IHK) by providing the Kashmiris from the IHK an opportunity to

² Luis Peral and Ashley J. Tellis, *Afghanistan 2011-2014 and Beyond: From support operations to sustainable peace* (Paris: EUISS, 2011), 11.

³ "Pakistan and India resume conventional CBM talks," *Dawn* (Islamabad), December 27, 2011, accessed 5th March, 2012, <http://www.dawn.com/2011/12/27/pakistan-and-india-resume-conventional-cbm-talks.html>

interact more with Azad Kashmir and Pakistani society. Therefore, the CBM process with India should also be reviewed so that it emphasizes more interactions between the Kashmiris and Pakistanis instead of only Indians and Pakistanis.

The Politico-Economic Dimension

The politico-economic factors have enormous significance for the future of Kashmir. The changing international environment, increasingly pragmatic character of the politics and societies, accelerated globalization process via social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter and Youtube, are evident from the rapid changes taking place the world over. These changes have approached Kashmir to some extent in terms of political awareness, consciousness, mobilization and participation.

This phenomenon spearheaded by communication technology the world over, highlights the enormous potential for Pakistan to reach out to the Kashmiri people through CBMs aimed at expanding its own influence, footprint and acceptability by providing the Kashmiris living in IHK, scholarships, university education quotas and job in sectors where they have relevant potential and skills of excelling. Sectors such as embroidery, carpet industry, weaving, fruit processing, carving and furniture making etc. provide the Kashmiri people a traditional advantage and substantial market niche. This niche once explored will not only allow the Kashmiri people opportunities in Pakistan, but also expedite a gradual economic and cultural integration of Pakistani and Kashmiri people based on sustained and expandable economic interdependence.⁴

This could also help revive, expand and diversify the industrial base and export potential of Pakistan by increasing the exports of those products in which the Kashmiri people have an advantage of skills and specialization.

Moreover, the recent results of the AJK elections have allowed the mainstream political parties of Pakistan to be seen as acceptable to the Kashmiris and demonstrated a significant shift in the traditional politics of Kashmir. The results have indicated that the Kashmiri people whilst valuing their own identity and sensitive to the nature and history of the Kashmir dispute are not unmindful of their contemporary challenges and problems of employment, education, and health care.

The last AJK elections, in which the mainstream political parties of Pakistan made substantial gains, demonstrate a new Kashmiri thinking. This also proves that Kashmiris have now realized that the solution of these contemporary challenges lie in allowing Pakistan's mainstream political parties to represent them both in Islamabad and Muzaffarabad.

⁴ Sujay Mehdudia, "Love across the border", *The Hindu*(New delhi), February 22, 2012, accessed on 5th March, 2012, <http://www.thehindu.com/life-and-style/metroplus/article2919795.ece>

Additionally, this would also highlight the significance of the Kashmir issue in the mainstream politics of Pakistan and make any costly compromise by the political elite of Pakistan detrimental to the interests of Kashmiris, improbable if not impossible. This political transformation of the Kashmiri psychology reflects a pragmatic approach of future and contemporary issues with Islamabad than even with Muzaffarabad.⁵

The agenda of the CBMs should include prospects of offering Kashmiri people jobs, intellectual exchanges, political participation, and most importantly, a better quality of life.

This will direct their expectations not only towards Pakistan's armed forces, but they would also see the Pakistani society as offering them the opportunities and means for improvement. The Kashmiris, this way will look forward to an integrated, better quality of life which India (the biggest democracy and one of the fastest growing economies in the world) has denied them over the past 65 years. Therefore, trade volume, social interactions and economic integration of Kashmiri people should be accelerated and expanded across both sides of the LoC on a larger and more frequent scale than across the international border between Pakistan and India.

In this manner, the Kashmiris of IHK would see not just a common affinity, identity and history but most importantly a common future with Pakistan.

The Constitutional and Legal Paradox

1. According to the Article 370 of the Indian Constitution⁶, the state of Jammu and Kashmir is subordinate to the legislation carried out by the Indian Parliament in case of defence, foreign policy and communication. And if the IHK State legislature so decides, also in case of other matters and issues.
2. In addition, the above Article of the Indian Constitution not only provides New Delhi its main legal basis for claiming AJK to be an integral part of the Indian dominion, but also makes Indian political leadership's ability to achieve a national consensus on any political compromise with Pakistan over Kashmir, virtually impossible.
3. In contrast, the Article 1 of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan⁷ identifies the territorial claims of Pakistan, which

⁵ *AJK General Election Result 2011*, accessed March 6, 2012 http://www.ajk.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=414&Itemid=169

⁶ *Constitution of India*, accessed March 6, 2012 http://www.ajk.gov.pk/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=414&Itemid=169

⁷ *The Constitution of The Islamic Republic of Pakistan*, accessed on March 6, 2012 <http://www.mofa.gov.pk/ABF1007F-CD3C-439C-BA1E-DE5250E0A983/FinalDownload/DownloadId->

reflects the legal situation as it stood in 1973. The current text of the Constitution of Pakistan does not include the territory of Gilgit-Baltistan, which has been declared a province of Pakistan.⁸

4. This creates a constitutional and legal dilemma for the state of Pakistan, both in terms of its national and international legal consequences, which could be exploited by other states on various possible pretexts. The fundamental emphasis in this case is to highlight the need to accord *de jure* status to Gilgit-Baltistan (vide a new constitutional amendment), which in any case has already been given the *de facto* status of a province of Pakistan, by measures such as provincial polls, participation of mainstream political parties of Pakistan and the subsequent election of its own Chief Minister.
5. After the nuclear tests by both India and Pakistan in May 1998, The UN Security Council Resolution 1172 called upon "*India and Pakistan to resume the dialogue between them on all outstanding issues, particularly on all matters pertaining to peace and security, in order to remove the tensions between them, and encourages them to find mutually acceptable solutions that address the root causes of those tensions, including Kashmir.*"⁹
6. The introduction of the nuclear dimension contributed to the revival of the international community's interest in the Kashmir dispute, which was reflected in the form of the UN Security Council resolution 1172.
7. Since the UN Resolutions on Kashmir calling for a plebiscite, are under Chapter 6 instead of Chapter 7, therefore, the international community lacks motivation and compulsion to support the implementation of these resolutions, which call for a plebiscite over Kashmir.
8. Henceforth, notwithstanding the moral strength of these resolutions and Pakistan's principled and consistent stance over them, the probability of their implementation through international support is currently limited. Therefore, in light of the constitutional and legal constraints discussed above, a soft power and socio-economic approach towards Kashmir issue

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⁸ Shabbir Mir, "Gilgit-Baltistan part of Pakistan, declares court," *The Express Tribune* (Islamabad), July 9, 2010, accessed March 6, 2012. <http://tribune.com.pk/story/26648/gilgit-baltistan-part-of-pakistan-declares-court/>

⁹ *United Nations Security Council Resolution 1172*, adopted by the Security Council at its 3890th meeting on 6th June 1998, accessed on 6th March, 2012, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N98/158/60/PDF/N9815860.pdf?OpenElement>

instead of a state-centric approach would be more feasible in the contemporary international environment.

Socio-Cultural Dimension

Frequent cultural and intellectual exchanges between the civil society for example university students, scholars, writers, journalists, artists, poets etc. should take place between Pakistani and Kashmiri people living in IHK to allow them to preserve their own history, values and ideology; consolidate the common ideological and historical roots between Kashmir and the Pakistani societies and gradually enable a process of socio-cultural integration. This will also provide the Kashmiri people an opportunity to see a qualitative advantage and help them in identifying a cultural incentive in joining a state with a common value system, ideological heritage, culture and history instead of joining a society, which suppresses their historical and ideological heritage.

In addition, this would allow the Kashmiris to be in a position to review the status quo. This state of affairs is neither sustainable nor acceptable to the Kashmiri people. Free media access to IHK should be a proposal based on the universally accepted right of free expression to access to information, which should be pursued not just bilaterally and multi-laterally but also on international media and international human rights groups and organizations.

Strategic Restraint Regime

During the initial phase of the Composite Dialogue process between India and Pakistan in February 2004, Islamabad had suggested a 'strategic restraint regime' to New Delhi, which could help build a basic yet comprehensive framework for pursuing not only strategic restraint regime but also developing a strategic architecture based on trust, restraint and prevention of a destabilizing arms race in South Asia.

This proposal was based on the two sides agreeing on conflict resolution, conventional balance, restraint on missile race and reducing the risks of nuclear war.¹⁰ Maintaining conventional balance in South Asia is key towards reducing the risks of a nuclear arms race in this region; preventing the nuclear threshold from stooping dangerously low, destabilizing the strategic stability, particularly during crisis periods and lastly in reducing exorbitant expenditure on conventional capabilities and weapon systems, which otherwise could be allocated towards human security, socio-economic development and peace building efforts.

This expensive cycle could be contextualized in terms of the classic relevance of Security-Insecurity Paradox, in this region. More importantly, reducing defence expenditure will itself serve as a substantive CBM

¹⁰ Interview with Ambassador Masood Khan, former DG Disarmament at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Islamabad on February 17th, 2004.

between New Delhi and Islamabad. I will also enrich confidence level of smaller states of South Asia towards the peaceful intentions of New Delhi.

Although this Pakistani proposal did not invoke a favorable response from New Delhi¹¹, but considering its principled position, and relevance to future peace and stability in South Asia and its consistency with international non-proliferation regimes, it is imperative that Pakistan must continue to reiterate this proposal. Pakistan should also link this proposal with its contribution and co-operation in the international non-proliferation regime, which otherwise should not be open-ended.

Accelerated arms race and rapidly expanding conventional asymmetries are inherently destabilizing trends, which makes it further difficult for Pakistan to be unmindful of its traditional security concerns, particularly in the absence of conflict resolution on Kashmir. Therefore, progress on Kashmir should be pursued in tandem with progress on viable and sustainable arms control mechanisms in the South Asian region, to prevent potentially harmful destabilizing trends for the peace and security of the region.

Revival of Founder's Vision

"Our Foreign Policy is one of friendliness and goodwill towards the nations of the world. We do not cherish aggressive designs against any country or nation. We believe in the principle of honesty and fair-play in national and international dealings and are prepared to make our utmost contribution to the promotion of peace and prosperity among the nations of the world. Pakistan will never be found lacking in extending its material and moral support to the oppressed and suppressed peoples of the world, and in upholding the principles of the United Nations Charter."¹²

Foreign policy of any state is aimed to pursue its national interests, internationally. As highlighted by Pakistan's founder in the above text, the state of Pakistan aspires to play a peaceful, positive and productive role in the international community on the basis of justice and equality. However, these long-term goals can only be pursued, if these are based on a rational and realistic policy, formulated in accordance with the dynamic nature of international politics, structure of the international political system and domestic compulsions of the state and society of Pakistan.

The prevailing international and regional environment needs to be understood in pragmatic terms, which should lead to a realistic appreciation of viable and available policy options. The Indian stance, by virtue of the growing economic and strategic interests of major powers

¹¹ ISPR, Press release of National Command Authority Statement dated January 13, 2010, accessed on March 6, 2012, http://www.ispr.gov.pk/front/main.asp?o=t-press_release&id=1110

¹² Quaid-e-Azam's radio address to the people of the USA, February 1948

associated with Indian economy, vibrant market and military, is gaining international currency with most of the important capitals around the world. This has also allowed New Delhi more options and greater leverage over major powers by virtue of its enhanced economic, political and strategic capital, wielded via an astute diplomacy.

In addition, the constitutional measures taken by New Delhi and limitations imposed by UN resolution on Kashmir (being under Chapter 6 instead of Chapter 7), further limits the possibility of a successful state-centric approach by Islamabad. Moreover, options relying on hard power have not yielded favorable results for any side and actually led to further complicating the issue instead of helping resolve it. Moreover, Pakistan's domestic economic and political situation further weakened its ability to reconcile and bring all domestic political actors on the same page to allow any viable compromise to be politically acceptable to all of the stakeholders.

Over the past two decades, the growing asymmetry between India and Pakistan is not limited to conventional capabilities but also is more profound in the realm of soft power. The economic, trade, commerce, media, diaspora and growth of an information-based economy have further accentuated the strategic and political disadvantages which Islamabad is facing.

The combination and relevance of these complex factors further reduces Pakistan's ability to influence major capitals, particularly in multi-lateral fora such as the UNSC, Commonwealth, SAARC, ASEAN Regional Forum and various others. This constrains Pakistan's options and prevents it from employing a proactive, incentive-based diplomacy for the international community, at a time when economic interests are dominating foreign policies of major powers. Although eventually rejected as a consequence of Pakistan's threat to quit the forum, even OIC considered India's intention to join it.

Bilateralism in the Indo-Pakistan context is also not likely to help in conflict resolution mainly due to the nuclear deterrence, resilience of Indian state operators, political compulsions of coalition governments in both India and Pakistan and lack of interest by the international community. All these factors have converged to enhance the relative influence and interests of New Delhi and created more multi-dimensional disadvantages for Islamabad in the emerging international power structure.

The Post 9/11 scenario helped India paint the Kashmir freedom struggle as a manifestation of terrorism but a people-to-people approach based on expanded interaction between Kashmiris on both sides of the LoC would offer Islamabad far more policy options than the current approach.

A fresh perspective towards the Kashmir issue based on an efficient employment of soft power (economic, cultural, educational,

professional and intellectual exchanges), would allow Pakistan the political, diplomatic and strategic influences This could not be achieved through continued reliance over hard power during the last 65 years. Such an approach would not only be seen as be useful domestically but helpful in improving Pakistan's international stature. Since 9/11, Pakistan's international standing and stature has become a legacy of being seen as the epicenter of international terrorism.

Moreover, this would also help restore the credibility to the Kashmiri independence movement as genuine and based on their legitimate and internationally recognized right of self-determination. In addition, it would allow the Kashmiri freedom struggle to be gradually de-linked from the Indian allegations of being associated with terrorism. Lastly, this would also create more political and diplomatic space for Pakistan and help it in recovering from the post-9/11 legacy of terrorism-led pre-occupation of its policy and resource orientation.

The Kashmiri people, particularly their youth are expected to be more interested in serious career opportunities, socio-economic development and unification of Azad Jammu & Kashmir with more autonomy, opportunities, freedom and being part of a structure with which they share ideological, cultural and social identities. These factors would represent genuine incentives for the Kashmiri people by both India and Pakistan which could in the long-term, pay not only the Kashmiris, but also the Pakistani and Indian societies, far greater dividends.

The social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter and YouTube are already providing the Kashmiri people, particularly their youth, access to the changing international political culture. This kind of exposure may result in public reactions such as those visible not only on the streets of the Middle East but also in London, Wall Street and Madrid.

This social transformation has huge potential for mobilizing and organizing political movements in future, even in societies under strict control such as Syria, Egypt and could also play an important role in mobilizing the Kashmiri youth, who are politically more vigilant than their parent generation.

Like their counterparts in the Middle East and Western Europe, the vibrant Kashmiri youth desires to participate in the globalization process by identifying themselves with the trends and changes in the international society. These trends cannot be excluded from consideration or restricted perpetually in the Indian-held Kashmir.

The Way Forward: Policy Recommendations

While maintaining our principled position on Kashmir issue, a soft power long term approach is recommended in which Kashmiris should be encouraged for greater interaction with Pakistan and between themselves (IHK and AJK).

Socio-Cultural Integration

- Pakistan should continue efforts towards a political solution which should be based on three prongs i.e. enhanced interaction with Kashmiris on all fronts, coupled with well-articulated exterior maneuver and ensuring our own economic and internal stability.
- A strong Pakistan will not only ensure strategic dialogue and CBMs with India from a position of strength but will also attract the people of Kashmir, who look towards Pakistan as the only international supporter, flag bearer of their cause and opportunity-provider for its future.
- A strong and united Pakistan will also deter India and its intelligence agencies from creating unrest especially in Baluchistan. Hence, concerted efforts must be made to revive the economy, build cohesion at the political front, and ensure total national integration, which are essential domestic prerequisites for pursuing, uniting and sustaining the domestic support for the Kashmir cause.
- Greater emphasis should be laid on socio-economic development and political harmony.
- Softening of border and more pronounced trade incentives to both parts of Kashmir should be assured.

A Consistent and 'National' Kashmir policy

- Over the past six and a half decades, Pakistan has suffered from the lack of a coherent and consistent policy on Kashmir. Most initiatives have been individual or leadership-centric. Though our principled position remains consistent, yet successive governments have adopted fluctuating stands ranging from overly aggressive, appeasement to apologetically passive, thus playing into Indian hands and undermining both our own national and international credibility and limiting our influence over the Kashmir issue.
- Within Kashmir also, preparation of the home front through internal political stability, economic revival, and consensus on the recommended policy option should be gradually, systematically and continuously developed across all segments of social strata, ideological and political interest groups and actors. Role of media in this context could be very significant and meaningful.
- Mobilizing international opinion is an obligation Pakistan cannot afford to overlook. Therefore, a soft-power-based approach should help improve Pakistan's domestic traction, international leverage, create more option options and eventually augment its international influence and standing.

- Strong socio-political and socio-economic initiatives ought to be given to ensure systematic, visible and sustained development of AJK and Northern Areas.
- Azad Kashmir government should play a major part through whole-hearted participation, mobilization of local population, political stability, mature political leadership, and last but not the least, interaction with the people of IHK at all levels.
- The role of Kashmiris living abroad is increasingly becoming very important as people from Kashmir represent important political constituencies in important capitals, such as London and Brussels, and their growing influence over both the Houses of Westminster in the UK needs to be properly channelized and employed for highlighting the Kashmir issue. This could be very useful in creating an environment of sympathy towards the Kashmiri people, and understanding of the realities and history of the Kashmir issue on the international level.
- In addition, student unions, lobbying groups, study groups and think tanks should also be developed in international media. Publications and think tanks should encourage Pakistani and Kashmiri scholars to represent the realities of Kashmir not merely in occasional seminars and conferences, but also by maintaining a sustained presence by holding permanent faculty positions in influential and credible seats of higher learning at think tanks and leading universities.
- On important and memorable days, talk shows, documentaries, seminars, conferences and demonstrative rallies should be planned and organized in not just Pakistan but also by Kashmiri people in major cities around the world such as New York, Washington DC, London, Brussels etc.
- Various international credible human rights groups should be encouraged and facilitated to focus on the human rights violations in Indian-held Kashmir, as it has significance for the international image that India aspires to build to justify its rise as a major power, acceptable to the international community.
- A comprehensive online database should be developed, which should be accessible to researchers, scholars and students all around the world, to help facilitate their research and study by providing them updated facts and figures and HR violations record regarding IHK.
- Collection of funds for the Kashmir cause by philanthropists and internationally recognized human rights organizations.
- Offensive media strategy to support the recommended policy options should be developed in print, electronic, domestic and international media to develop support, acceptability and consensus towards national policy.

Lastly, Pakistan should aspire to develop a comprehensive and realistic policy towards Kashmir, based on a well-calibrated appreciation of all the instruments and elements of national power. The policy makers should carefully and unemotionally compare the relative costs and benefits, being mindful and sensitive towards the greater national interests of developing the sort of domestic and international environment. This is important to make its policy not only acceptable to the domestic and international audience but also to and stabilize its own War on Terror-ravaged economy.

Such an approach, based more on pragmatism instead of optimism, though not yielding immediate results, would eventually in the long-term, lead to favorable circumstances, which will diversify both Pakistani policy options and expand its international leverage. This would also enhance its respect and prestige internationally and thwart the longer-term and eventual Indian goal of isolating Pakistan in the international community and presenting it as part of a problem rather than a solution. This Indian strategy could limit the acceptability of Pakistan's existing hard power capabilities by presenting them as a potential threat to international peace and security. Therefore, a fresh soft-power based long-term approach, encapsulating all dimensions of soft power, including economic, cultural, political, academic, intellectual, ideological, would eventually not only help Pakistan consolidate its capabilities and also make it more relevant to promoting international peace, security and progress. This will finally enhance its leverage and influence over international powers and also over India and Kashmiris.

This would be useful both in multi-lateral and bilateral contexts, and diversify Pakistan's policy options, and when combined with hard power, particularly nuclear deterrent, will make its argument and position over Kashmir more influential and convincing. Merely relying on history, ideology and culture may sustain the issue but is not likely to resolve it, particularly when both hard power and soft power-based asymmetries are fast increasing to the detriment of Pakistan. Notwithstanding the economic disadvantages, the legitimacy and acceptability of the Pakistani voice on Kashmir is being singled out, owing to new international political realities and power dynamics.

Pakistan should plan to present itself as a state, which could contribute positively and meaningfully to international peace, security and at the same time, also benefit through its own economic progress by providing peaceful solutions to the prevailing challenges and disputes. This approach is essential, especially in an environment when hard power is increasingly being viewed as a costly instrument of foreign policy.

Foreign policy is an instrument to express not only the internal aspirations but also allows a state to project all the elements of its domestic power to the outside world. Therefore, only an economically

strong, politically united and stable Pakistan can devise and employ a strong foreign policy. Our dominant international interest should be to create such a state and society, which is internally more united and economically, politically, ethnically and ideologically strong, and is viewed as a positive contributor to the international community. This will make its claim of sovereign equality to be taken more seriously by the world at large. This will also augment the strategic stability in this region by making its nuclear deterrence more credible and presenting Pakistan as a responsible nuclear power, in control of not just its nuclear arsenal but also its political system and economy.

That is why, during the transitional phase of international politics from the Atlantic Ocean-based 20th century to Pacific Ocean based 21st century, it is about time that Pakistan should attempt to recover from the legacy of 9/11 and terrorism.

This will allow Pakistan not only to regain its rightful place internationally as a state which promotes world peace by upholding the principles of the UN Charter but also build a stable, united and viable state. Such was the state, which our Founder had envisioned, which is strong and united, both internally and externally.

