

# **VISION AND THE INDO-PAKISTAN PEACE PROCESS**

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## **Introduction**

No effort for peace building can yield positive results without vision articulated by the stakeholders involved in an armed conflict. Peace process, as a wholesome and a comprehensive approach to terminate a conflict situation, can reach a logical conclusion if innovative and path-breaking solutions are worked out and implemented with proper political will and determination.

Since August 1947 when India and Pakistan emerged as new states on the map till today, the two neighbours, despite having a shared history, geography and way of life are bogged down in endless conflicts resulting into three wars and several armed engagements. Hope and pessimism shaped the fluid nature of Indo-Pakistan relations whereby the two neighbours missed several opportunities for peace and paid a heavy price of confrontation. Yet, since 1997 when a degree of peace process was launched during the second government of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif until today, India and Pakistan are unable to make a breakthrough in resolving contentious issues outlined in the composite dialogue. Ups and downs in their peace process is certainly an issue which needs to be analyzed in some detail because several track-I, track-II and track-III initiatives launched by the stakeholders at the official and civil-society levels in the two countries provided a road map and a comprehensive plan to amicably resolve conflicts and move in the direction of permanent peace.

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Following its victory in the 11 May general elections, the Pakistan Muslim League (N) formed government and Nawaz Sharif became prime minister for the third time. He said that “it was his desire to move ahead in ties by picking up the threads from the peace process in 1999 when former Indian prime minister Atal Behari Vajpayee made a historic visit to Lahore.<sup>(1)</sup> His Indian counterpart Manmohan Singh also expressed his optimism to ‘jump-start the stalled peace process. In that scenario, new prospects to revive the process were certainly gaining momentum, but with several challenges and impediments amidst skirmishes along the Line of Control in Kashmir in August 2013.

This paper will examine in detail different pros and cons of the Indo-Pakistan peace process while taking into account the issues which since long seem to have impeded the process of peace. Furthermore, the paper will argue to what extent there exists a linkage between vision and peace process and how the leadership of India and Pakistan can pursue a visionary and forward-looking approach so that opportunities which exist for meaningful cooperation between the two neighbours are seized and a better future is ensured for their coming generations. The following questions will be examined in the article:-

1. What is a peace process and how it can be relevant in case of India and Pakistan?
2. What are the major requirements of the Indo-Pakistan peace process and how the two sides can resolve issues which impede the process of peace?
3. What is the linkage between vision and peace process and to what extent the destiny of South Asia can change for the better if New Delhi and Islamabad are able to articulate a vision which can be perceptible, practicable and help the process of peace?
4. What is the future of Indo-Pakistan peace process?

The role of moderates and hardliners in the Indo-Pakistan peace process will also be examined in the context of mindset which happens to be inflexible, indifferent to the costs of conflicts and supportive to the maintenance of status quo.

### **Dynamics of peace process**

Peace process is a multi-dimensional concept which after the end of the Cold War is widely used to resolve inter- and intra-state conflicts. Its comprehensive nature is obvious from the fact that at the individual, group, community, state, regional and international levels, stakeholders involved in a conflict attempt to initiate the process of peace in an attempt to terminate the state of violence and armed conflict.

There are several definitions of peace process which can help understand its nature, role and dynamics. According to the *Free Dictionary*, peace process means, “any social process undertaken by government who want their citizens to believe they are trying to avoid armed hostilities.”<sup>(2)</sup> *Macmillan*

*Dictionary* defines peace process as, “a series of discussions to try to find a peaceful solution to a war or to political violence.”<sup>(3)</sup> According to *Collins English Dictionary*, “the peace process negotiates (between governments, countries, etc.) toward peace or the resolution of a conflict.”<sup>(4)</sup> Harold Saunders, the architect of Israeli-Palestinian peace process and a former US government official in his book *The Other Walls* maintains that,

The peace process is more than conventional diplomacy and negotiation. It encompasses a full range of political, psychological, economic, diplomatic and military actions woven together into a comprehensive effort to establish peace between Israel and its neighbors. Progress toward peace depends on breaking down the barriers to negotiation and reconciliation, the other walls. If we ignore the politics of breaking down these barriers the mediator and negotiator many never have a chance.<sup>(5)</sup>

Saunders further elaborates the dynamics of peace process by arguing that “any negotiating process encompasses two large periods — one that precedes actual negotiation and one that start when negotiators are gathered around the table. The theorists and the diplomats normally concentrate on identifying the formulas and techniques that are useful in the negotiating room. They have historically paid less attention to ways of persuading people to enter that room.”<sup>(6)</sup> About “the other walls” as an impediment to peace, Saunders is of the opinion that “the other walls that block the way for peace are often barriers in human perception and feeling that are all too infrequently addressed by the diplomatic option papers.”<sup>(7)</sup> He outlines five different phases in a peace process viz:

- Defining a problem.
- Committing to a negotiated solution.
- Developing framework.
- Negotiations.
- Implementing the negotiated settlement.<sup>(8)</sup>

Saunders’s explanation of peace process cannot be applicable in cases where the parties involved not only lack basic knowledge about peace process, but also do not possess the professional approach, will or determination to move in that direction. In conflicts where the stakeholders reach the realization that enough destruction has been caused as a result of armed conflicts or a conflict-like situation, one can expect a plausible outcome of peace process. The case of India and Pakistan fits into the category of “no war, no peace” situation as neither the two sides are engaged in a war nor are living like peaceful neighbours. The absence of a purposeful dialogue is a major failure of peace process because the lack of progress leads to frustration, despair and loss of hope for a better future.

Sydney D. Bailey, in his book *Peace is a Process*, defines peace process as,

Peace begins within ourselves. It is to be implemented within the family, in our meetings, in our work and leisure, in our localities and internationally. The task will never be done. Peace is a process to engage in, not a goal to be reached.<sup>(9)</sup>

Likewise, “peace process is a long drawn-out affair, based on the will of the parties concerned to find a peaceful solution to their conflict. It is based on reciprocal measures. Among its ingredients are measures which favor part of a package. One party may not be happy with what it is expected to give away but may willingly do so in return for some reward that it basically needs.”<sup>(10)</sup> Therefore, “a peace process needs to send a clear message to the world that its participants are serious about the resolution of their conflicts and can sustain the process of dialogue despite frustration and impediments. They must also show that they realize the risks of derailing the peace process through the politics of confrontation and understand the benefits if they move in the direction of unity.”<sup>(11)</sup> Therefore, “peace process means systematic efforts made by warring parties to defuse tension by unleashing a process of dialogue for the resolution of issues which cause friction and instability in their relations. The end is peace but the techniques which are used to build bridges of reconciliation and cooperation require a process without a particular time framework.”<sup>(12)</sup> An Indian civil-society activist, Paula Banerjee talks about peace process in the context of South Asia by arguing that,

What is known as the peace process in Kashmir, North East India and Sri Lanka does not present before us a scenario of sanitized vacuum, but rather of acute contentions, a situation where dialogue for peace continues, at the same time, violence looms large over the scene. Hence, a conflict and dialogue for peace exist side by side in most of South Asia, a case of war — peace continuum.<sup>(13)</sup>

Like other conflict-ridden parts of the world, in South Asia also peace process got an impetus in the post-Cold War era. In both inter- and intra-state conflicts, peace process emerged as a useful tool for the parties concerned to deal with an intractable conflict by launching a process. Some of the peace processes known have worked or to be in existence for quite some time in South Asia are as follows:

- The Afghan peace process.
- The Indo-Pakistan peace process encompassing a broad canvass of numerous unresolved issues.
- The Kashmir peace process.
- The peace process in Nepal.

- The peace process in Sri Lanka.
- The peace process in Chittagong Hill Tracts (CHT) in Bangladesh.

One major missing link in peace processes in South Asia and, for that matter, in other parts of the world is the absence of a practicable vision. The requirements and conditions of peace process must be met but without foresight and a forward-looking approach to see things beyond one cannot expect a peace process to take off. Unfortunately, the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, which got a jump start as a result of vision shared by the then Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin and the PLO chairman Yasser Arafat, failed to reach its logical conclusion when Rabin was assassinated by a hawkish Jew in November 1995. His successor, Benjamin Netanyahu, belonging to the Likud party, had a different vision on Israeli-Palestinian peace process based on denying Palestinians a viable state and reaching a just peace with them. With tunnel vision and a parochial mindset, peace process cannot render positive results. In the case of India and Pakistan, the missing link in the peace process is also the absence of visionary approach by the leadership from both sides or a vision which lacks adequate foresight, flexibility, plan and purpose.

Four major obstacles which prevent the pursuit of positive vision by India and Pakistan are:

First, the baggage of the past particularly the events of 1947 and the post-partition armed conflicts between the two countries. The enemy images of both sides still impede pursuing an approach which can look beyond historical cleavages and move forward.

Second, the absence of a vision for a better future for South Asia. As long as India and Pakistan are unable to normalize their conflict-ridden ties, South Asia would remain poor, backward and marginalized in the global sphere because both countries account for more than 75 per cent of the population, area and resources of the region. The two countries do talk about regional cooperation in South Asia and better connectivity, but their approach and statements do not go beyond rhetoric.

Third, parochial mindset on resolving conflicts, particularly those threatening peace in South Asia is a reflection of lack of vision on the part of India and Pakistan. It is because of the absence of positive vision that New Delhi and Islamabad are unable to make a breakthrough in composite dialogue, a fundamental part of their peace process. The politics of “blame game,” allegations and counter-allegations form the core of Indo-Pakistan antagonism. Finally, the absence of participation of the youth in the Indo-Pakistan peace process is a major failure on the part of the two countries to articulate a better future for those who will continue to suffer if policies based on positive vision are not formulated by the two sides. When the syllabi of educational institutions of India and Pakistan is devoid of substance promoting goodwill and amity about each other, the mindset of the youth of the two countries cannot be

different from the older generations. Unfortunately, mistrust, suspicion, ill-will and paranoia which existed in the partition generation tend to permeate as far as the youths of India and Pakistan are concerned. In the name of patriotism, nationalism and jingoism, vested-interest groups in the two countries are able to influence the minds of youths so as to transform them as hawkish and intransigent.

Summing up the dynamics of peace process in the context of South Asia, one can figure out six major impediments:

1. Unresolved conflicts.
2. Enemy images.
3. Lack of political will and determination.
4. Absence of positive vision.
5. Unprofessional and non-serious approach to deal with issues present in the composite dialogue.
6. Inflexible approach.

Without overcoming such impediments, the very existence of the Indo-Pakistan peace process would remain fragile and in jeopardy.

### **The Indo-Pakistan Peace Process**

The other walls which since 1947 until today tend to deny the people of India and Pakistan the resolution of their contentious issues are primarily psychological in nature. The walls of paranoia, mistrust and suspicion still remain a reality in South Asia. Unless these walls are demolished as a result of a positive process of peace, any breakthrough in the Indo-Pakistan peace process is unlikely. What is the nature of this peace process and why the two countries, despite the launching of composite dialogue since 1997, are unable to proceed in the right direction? How the Indian government will seize the opportunity which exists in view of the clear commitment of Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to take the peace process to its logical conclusion?

Some of the major areas of the peace process over the years are listed below.

1. Agreement on ceasefire along the LoC since November 2003
2. Demobilization of forces along the borders following the attack on the Indian parliament on 13 December 2001 and the deployment of forces of the two countries on their borders
3. Holding of talks under the composite dialogue on contentious issues

4. Holding of periodic talks between India and Pakistan on issues, particularly on maintaining better communication lines for averting nuclear accidents and other nuclear-related matters
5. Improving trade, commercial and communication linkages by promoting people-to-people contacts
6. Launching of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service, Tharparkar-Monabao bus service, Amritsar-Nankana Sahib bus service which has facilitated thousands of Indians and Pakistanis and Kashmiris and has helped reduce enemy images about each other
7. Improving ties in education, science and technology
8. Better cooperation for combating terrorism, drugs and narcotics
9. Stabilizing their relations in the nuclear field by exchanging every year documents related to their nuclear installations and reaching an agreement on nuclear risk regime<sup>(14)</sup>

During his election campaign Nawaz Sharif promised to revive the Indo-Pakistan peace process. It is often argued that “the then Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee travelled to Lahore on the inaugural run of the Delhi-Lahore bus service and went up to the Minar-e-Pakistan firmly stamping the authenticity of the two-nation theory. But soon there was the Kargil episode, which Nawaz Sharif claimed was General Musharraf’s brainchild to discredit the democratic government and grab power, later on to be countered by the general’s foreign minister Abdul Sattar by writing that the Lahore peace process was a convenient alibi to world opinion, and especially influential powers, to abdicate responsibility to promote a joint settlement of the Kashmir question.”<sup>(15)</sup> According to the report of the Washington-based Center On Contemporary Conflict, “the Pakistan Army had planned the Kargil operation to scuttle the Indo-Pak peace process which had been initiated by Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and which had led to the 1999 Lahore agreement.”<sup>(16)</sup> What had happened in 1999 is now the thing of the past and both India and Pakistan need to pursue a fresh and innovative approach for a result oriented peace process. Instead of getting bogged down on historical events, which may appear to be unpleasant, the two neighbours need to pursue a fresh approach to seek out of box solution of issues which since 1947 till todate tend to impede normal and good-neighbourly relations.

According to a renowned Indian journalist, A.G. Noorani, “Manmohan Singh wants to work with Nawaz Sharif to chart a new course and pursue a new destiny in the relations between our countries. Nawaz Sharif fought the 1997 general elections on the plank *inter alia* of improving relations with India. Deve Gowda’s (Indian Prime Minister at the time) message of congratulations proposed an early resumption of dialogue. Nawaz Sharif’s reply suggested talks between Foreign Secretaries. This resulted in the Islamabad joint statement of June 23, 1997 which embodied a charter for a composite dialogue. I. K. Gujral wrecked it by renegeing on his commitment at Male to set up a working group on

Kashmir. The Bharatiya Janata Party regime which followed (1998-2004) did worse<sup>(17)</sup> Noorani's detailed account of the ups and downs in the bilateral relations since the launching of the composite dialogue proves how fragile is the political will from both sides to take the peace process to its logical conclusion. In order to seek better coordination at the track-I and track-II level, Nawaz Sharif emphasized the need for regular contacts at the highest level.

Pakistan's Foreign Office spokesman Aizaz Chaudhry said in his weekly media briefing that "the Prime Minister has given Ambassador Sheharyar Khan the responsibility of conducting track-II diplomacy in order to improve our ties with India."<sup>(18)</sup> Senior Indian diplomat, Ambassador Satinder K. Lambah, was named as the counterpart of Sheharyar Khan. According to media reports, when the announcement appointing Ambassador Sheharyar Khan was made, he was already in India and had met Prime Minister Manmohan Singh and conveyed to him "Pakistan's sincere desire to move forward on improving relations with India."<sup>(19)</sup> It is yet to be seen how Ambassador Khan and Ambassador Lambah will deal with the enormous challenges facing positive transformation of the peace process. The unresolved conflict over Jammu and Kashmir is a major challenge but more than that is the failure of the two sides to maintain ceasefire along the Line of Control agreed to in November 2003. The people of Jammu and Kashmir are the main sufferers of Indo-Pakistan conflict and may be the principal beneficiary if there is a meaningful breakthrough in the peace process.

Addressing a public meeting in Jammu, People's Democratic Party (PDP) patron Mufti Mohammad Sayeed said things had started falling in place for rejuvenation of the peace process with Pakistan. He said Jammu and Kashmir would be the biggest beneficiary if India and Pakistan were at peace with each other. The "LoC should become line of cooperation and not mere control. The propaganda that militants would sneak in through bases has been proved wrong. Time has come for breaking barriers and it will happen."<sup>(20)</sup> Referring to the viability of Indo-Pakistan peace process for the people of Jammu and Kashmir Mufti Sayeed further said that,

Though the entire population of the subcontinent has suffered due to prolonged conflict and armed confrontation between the two neighbouring countries, the brunt of such enmity has been borne mostly by the hapless people of Jammu and Kashmir. The ceasefire on the borders has brought much relief to the people living in the border areas besides paving way for pursuing the dialogue process between the two countries. The peace process, despite frequent disruptions and its slow pace, had brought hopes in the lives of millions of people in the two countries.<sup>(21)</sup>

He reminded the people in his public meeting that the PDP had pioneered the process of peace and reconciliation.<sup>(22)</sup> Unfortunately, the Indo-Pakistan peace process derailed after the terrorist attacks in Mumbai in

November 2008. The composite dialogue resumed in February 2011, and as a result a liberalized visa policy for the people of the two countries was announced but later the military skirmishes on the Line of Control in Kashmir once again slowed down the peace talks.<sup>(23)</sup> On 7 August Directors General, Military Operations (DGMO) of India and Pakistan talked on the hotline over the growing escalation of tension along the LoC.<sup>(24)</sup> India had accused Pakistan that its forces killed five Indian soldiers in the Poonch sector, a charge categorically denied by Pakistan. That incident which indicated the fragility of the ceasefire along the LoC, led to the resumption of charges and counter-charges against each other and overshadowed expectations for a new impetus to the peace process.

It is not the first time that the bilateral peace process is at stake because of tension along the LoC. In the past also, skirmishes along the LoC led to allegations and counter-allegations but this time it is quite serious because New Delhi squarely accused Pakistan of killing five Indian soldiers in the Poonch sector. In the Indian parliament, a lot of heated debate took place on the LoC issue in which the BJP blamed Defence Minister A. K. Anthony on taking a soft stance of what it called “deliberate” killing of Indian troops by Pakistani forces. It was because of the pressure exerted by the BJP that the Indian defense minister had to retract his earlier statement and making a fresh statement blaming Pakistan for the killing of Indian troops. The BJP also demanded that India suspend the composite dialogue with Pakistan in retaliation against the incident. Unfortunately, whenever there is a spell of cold war between India and Pakistan, no effort is made to independently probe the cause of the incident which triggers another round of confrontation. Until the two sides stick to a policy of not encouraging provocation and false allegations against each other following any unpleasant incident, whether at the LoC or elsewhere in their countries, one cannot expect any major transformation in the peace process.

The following table will help understand the dynamics of the peace process and the issues covered under it.

**Table**

**Indo-Pakistan peace process**

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Results</b>
Jammu and Kashmir	No progress, except the launching of Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service
Siachen, Sir Creek and conflict over water resources	Stalemate
People-to-people interaction	Marginal progress owing to some relaxation in the visa regime
Trade and commercial ties	Marginal progress because of non-granting of MFN status to India by Pakistan

Military confidence-building measures	At risk because of periodic violations and skirmishes along the Line of Control
Consultation and meetings at the highest level	Not regular as bilateral visits by the heads of state and government have not taken place in the last few years
Role of track II and III dialogue	Continuing but without any significant impact on the peace process
Cooperation to combat terrorism	Still not institutionalized but in existence under the framework of SAARC
Role of civil society	Marginal
Review of peace process at track-I level	Infrequent

It seems, there are more minuses than pluses in the process. The two sides have a history of derailing the peace process on account of some event and then reviving it again. The ups and downs in the peace process no doubt reflect the mindset of the two sides which still lacks positive vision and foresight. The price of confrontation between the two neighbours is paid by their people who continue to live in poverty, social backwardness and with a poor quality of life.

### **Composite dialogue and the way forward**

Composite dialogue is a major component of Indo-Pakistan peace process. It covers the following issues:

1. Peace and Security
2. Jammu and Kashmir
3. Siachen
4. Sir Creek
5. Terrorism and drug trafficking
6. Wullar Barrage/Tulbul navigation project
7. Promotion of friendly exchanges
8. Trade and economic cooperation

The Indo-Pakistan normalization process, which was suspended after the attack on the Indian parliament in December 2001, was resumed following the meeting between Indian Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee and Pakistan President Pervez Musharraf on the sidelines of the SAARC summit held in Islamabad in January 2004. Prior to that, on 22 October 2003, India had offered Pakistan a number of CBMs, including the resumption of sports, air and

shipping links, and a bus service between Srinagar and Muzaffarabad.<sup>(25)</sup> India's emphasis in the peace process has been on trade, people-to-people interaction and combating terrorism, whereas Pakistan focuses on the resolution of contentious issues, primarily Jammu and Kashmir.

The peace process which appeared irreversible after the resumption of the composite dialogue again got suspended following the Mumbai terrorist attack of November 2008, only to be resumed in February 2011. After the violent incidents at the LoC in August 2013, the two countries exchanged allegations of the November 2003 ceasefire violations thus derailing the talks held under the composite dialogue. There were attacks in India on the Lahore-Delhi bus service; at the Pakistan High Commission and the PIA office in Delhi both by the Congress and BJP demonstrators.

There are more reverses in the composite dialogue than any substantial progress achieved. Stagnation, stalemate, despair, fear and pessimism still loom large on the prospects of peace in South Asia. When one looks into the rich cultural heritage of the Indian sub-continent, particularly the Indus-Ganges civilization, gets a sense of bitterness finding so much mutual mistrust, suspicion and paranoid mindset. As the custodians of a centuries old civilization, the two countries can concentrate more on reviving the culture of peace and tolerance which was the hallmark of the Indian subcontinent. It appears to be difficult on account of more than six decades of animosities but not impossible.

One way to break the logjam and transform the mindset responsible for decades of confrontation is by pursuing a renaissance approach which would require focus on promoting better sharing of art, culture, music, history, archaeology and education. "While maintaining their identities, India and Pakistan must lift restrictions which impede the revival of their cultural heritage so that the present generation of the two countries is able to understand how tolerant and peaceful their ancient past was, and why the generations following the partition of the sub-continent pursued a violent and confrontationist path. In the political sphere, a renaissance approach would require reviving some of the symbols of peace and harmony which existed amidst the environment of hostility and mistrust. These symbols are the Liaquat-Nehru Pact of April 1950 for establishing communal peace, the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960 which tried to resolve a water conflict, the 1972 Simla Pact which enabled New Delhi and Islamabad to move forward following the Indo-Pakistan War of 1971, the Salal Dam agreement of 1978, the agreement on not attacking each other's nuclear installations of December 1988, the Lahore Declaration of February 1999, the agreement on preventing air and space violation, troop monitoring, [accord on] advance notice of military exercises (April 1991), agreement on banning chemical weapons (1992), and the Islamabad Declaration of January 2004 which provided a road map for the India-Pakistan peace process."<sup>(26)</sup> Therefore, "after decades of hostility and confrontation, it is time for India and Pakistan to think in terms of launching a renaissance so that the two neighbours, regardless of past bitterness, can cause the rebirth of centuries-old civilization. That will certainly help take the peace process to its logical conclusion."<sup>(27)</sup> According to a renowned

Indian security analyst, C. Raja Mohan, “Indo-Pak dialogue is a complex political theater. The signals put out by the principal players are often lost in the posturing of the political leaders on both sides. What is meant for the domestic audience is instantly relayed across the border and elicits violent verbal reaction. After considerable deliberations in the mid-1990s, India and Pakistan unveiled in September 1998 a framework for what is called a composite and integrated dialogue.”<sup>(28)</sup> Raja Mohan also raises 10 key questions related to Indo-Pakistan dialogue and peace process, viz:

- What do they talk about?
- What are the ‘Core’ Issues?
- What about linkages?
- Are there pre-conditions?
- Sequential or Simultaneous?
- Shape of the Table?
- Bilateral and Third Parties?
- Role of CBMs.
- Appropriate Interlocutors.
- Backchannel.<sup>(29)</sup>

Had those at the helm of affairs in India and Pakistan been visionary in their approach and acts, the two neighbours would have been able to sort out most of the contentious issues. What is vision and how it can bring a qualitative change in the Indo-Pakistan peace process? What is a negative and a positive peace process and how a positive vision can make a difference in bettering relations between the two neighbours? *The Oxford Dictionary and Thesaurus* defines vision as, “imaginative insight,” “a think or idea perceived.”<sup>(30)</sup> “A positive vision for South Asia means shared ownership of culture and civilization across the region from Afghanistan to Bangladesh, from Nepal to Sri Lanka, the regional culture of tolerance, coexistence and peace is to be reclaimed so that the world can have a positive image of South Asia. Again, it is India and Pakistan where qualitative change should take place so that the baggage of corruption, bad governance, poverty, illiteracy and intolerance can be shed.”<sup>(31)</sup> It is ironical that after every pledge which India and Pakistan make following the resumption of their peace talks, there are two steps forward and four steps backwards. Because of the lack of positive vision to take the composite dialogue to its logical conclusion and pursue a flexible approach on bilateral basis, one can observe the same old rhetoric, allegations and counter-allegations.

What is lacking in the Indo-Pakistan relations is a positive peace process which means the two countries’ resolve to work on the pluses while neutralizing the minuses. The positive side in their relations needs to be

highlighted. Negative peace process means a situation where unresolved issues are prolonged and either or both sides focus more on blaming each other for the failure or stagnation in talks rather than taking steps to remove the cause of stalemate and failures. While the peace process continues, it is only symbolic in nature and is devoid of any meaningful progress. Conceptually, peace process, which primarily evolved in the West, lacks the ownership in those regions where one can observe unabated process of armed conflicts. Whether it is the Arab-Israeli peace process, Afghanistan or India and Pakistan, there exists lack of ownership and a sense of better understanding on issues which provide a viable justification to support and strengthen the peace process. In such regions, peace process is perceived in a negative rather than in a positive sense. There cannot be a positive understanding of peace process unless the parties involved possess a positive approach about each other. When negativity is part of a particular culture, one cannot expect people to move in a positive direction.

The following table highlights important pros and cons of the positive and negative peace processes in the context of Indo-Pakistan relations.

**Table****Positive and Negative Peace Process**

<b>Issues</b>	<b>Negative PP</b>	<b>Positive PP</b>
Holding of composite dialogue		✓
Relaxing the visa regime		✓
Hotline between Directors General Military Operations		✓
Advance notification of military exercises		✓
Nuclear restraint regime		✓
Suspension of composite dialogue	✓	
Stalemate in resolving Siachen, Sir Creek and water issues	✓	
Hardline position on the Kashmir issue	✓	

Non-granting of MFN status to India	✓	
Stalemate in track-I dialogue	✓	

From the above table four conclusions could be drawn. First, superficial nature of the peace process as less serious and less visionary approach is pursued by the two sides on issues which require flexible and prudent response. Over the last 16 years, one can observe the mushrooming of track-II and III dialogue involving civil-society groups, former policy-makers and others but such initiatives are vulnerable to periodic suspension in track-I dialogue. Second, there is lack of follow-up and professional approach on the items of composite dialogue. Time line, which is a fundamental requirement for a positive peace process, is missing in the case of Indo-Pakistan composite dialogue. Negative peace process in Indo-Pak relations is indicative of the fact that no time line has been given ever to deal with the less contentious issues resulting into stalemate and stagnation in the composite dialogue. Third, military confidence-building measures, which are an integral part of the Indo-Pakistan peace process faced a setback when in August 2013 serious violations of ceasefire and skirmishes took place at the Line of Control. At least, one was optimistic that the ceasefire along the LoC which was agreed by India and Pakistan in November 2003 would hold. But, it seems, the very existence of military CBMs is at stake.

Finally, despite the rhetoric for peace demonstrated in track-I, II and III diplomacy, the mindset has not changed as far as the hardliners are concerned. Each time there is some incident along the LoC or acts of terror in India, Pakistan is held responsible. Whereas, as compared to India, Pakistan has suffered enormously because of large-scale violent and terrorist incidents in which around 50,000 civilians and security personnel have been killed. But Pakistan has not launched a vicious tirade against India despite the fact there are wide allegations of India's involvement in sponsoring terrorist groups particularly in Balochistan. India was not even a major issue in the May 2013 general elections in Pakistan. The fragility of the Indo-Pakistan peace process, including the composite dialogue, is due to the mindset which deepens mutual mistrust, suspicion and paranoia against each other.

With a parochial mindset, it is impossible for India and Pakistan to pursue a positive vision in their peace process. That is the lesson which can be learned from other peace processes. There is a way out of the periodic impasse in the Indo-Pakistan peace process provided the two sides create strong constituencies for peace composed of committed people with determination and clear objectives.

### Notes and References

1. See, "Pak-India inch closer to resuming peace dialogue," *Pakistan Today* (Lahore), 8 July 2013.
2. C.f. *The Free Dictionary*, <[www.freedictionary.com/peace+ process](http://www.freedictionary.com/peace+process)>, accessed on 3 August 2013.
3. <[www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/peace.process](http://www.macmillandictionary.com/dictionary/british/peace.process)>, accessed on 3 August 2013.
4. <[www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/peace-process](http://www.collinsdictionary.com/dictionary/english/peace-process)>, accessed on 3 August 2013.
5. Harold H. Saunders, *The Other Walls: The Arab-Israeli Peace Process In a Global Perspective* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), revised edition, p.3.
6. *Ibid.*, pp.4-5.
7. *Ibid.*, p. 6.
8. *Ibid.*, 22-37.
9. Sidney D. Bailey, *Peace is a Process* (London: Quaker House Services, 1993), p. 173.
10. Talat A. Wizarat, "Peace Processes: A Comparative Study," in Moonis Ahmar (ed.), *The Arab-Israeli Peace Process: Lessons for India and Pakistan* (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2001), p. 41. According to her, "no peace process can lead to success unless it addresses the concerns of both or all parties. Either side should not monopolize the agenda. Although, there is a tendency among stronger parties to project their own concerns without any regard for the interests of the weaker party, unless the major concerns of all parties are included, the peace process will not lead to positive results," *Ibid.*, p.50.
11. Moonis Ahmar, "The concept of peace process," in Ahmar (ed.), *The Arab-Israeli Peace Process...*" (ref. 10) p.26. Conceptually, "peace process is a pragmatic mechanism to break centuries of animosity between or among state and non-state actors. While the state is a major player in peace process, non-state actors, particularly those belonging to civil society also have a stake for sustaining the environment of dialogue and negotiations." *Ibid.*, p.37.
12. Moonis Ahmar, "Where is Indo-Pak Peace Process Heading?" *South Asian Affairs* (Visakhapatnam), Vol. 1.No. 1, January-June 2008, pp. 35-36.

13. Paula Banerjee, "Introduction," in Samir Kumar Das (ed.), *Peace Processes and Peace Accords* (New Delhi: Sage publications, 2005), p. 115.
14. Ahmar, "Where is Indo-Pak Peace Process Heading?" (ref.12), pp.41-42.
15. "Reviving Indo-Pak peace process," *Recorder Report*, 15 May 2013.
16. Quoted in, Amir Mir, "Musharraf planned Kargil to scuttle Indo-Pak peace process," *The News* (Islamabad/Rawalpindi), 2 February 2013.
17. A.G. Noorani, "Agenda for peace process," *Dawn* (Karachi), 15 June 2013. He further states that "in 2013, it should take less time to mesh the rival texts into a draft acceptable to both sides. In an improved atmosphere we can tackle next Sir Creek, Siachen and move on to resolve the Kashmir dispute. Once officials finish the homework, a summit can break the logjam and define an enduring framework to make détente irreversible," *Ibid.*,
18. "Pak-India inch closer to resuming peace dialogue," *Pakistan Today* (Lahore), 8 July 2013.
19. *Ibid.*
20. See, "Next government will have to revive Indo-Pak peace process: Mufti," *The Hindustan Times*, (New Delhi), 23 June 2013.
21. *Ibid.*
22. *Ibid.*
23. *Ibid.*
24. "Army Officers in hotline contact to ease tension" *Dawn*, 8 August 2013.
25. Ishtiaq Ahmed, "The Future of Indo-Pak Peace Process Amid The War On Terror In Afghanistan," *IPRI Journal* (Islamabad), Vol. VII. No. 2, Summer 2007, p.61.
26. Moonis Ahmar, "For a South Asian Renaissance," *The Times of India*, (New Delhi), 29 June 2011.
27. *Ibid.* The Indo-Pak peace process should not be confined to official rhetoric from two sides; it requires a movement at the popular level, so that a sense of ownership is created for a process which can bring enormous benefits to the poverty-stricken people of the two countries.
28. C. Raja Mohan, "India-Pakistan: Ten Questions on Peace Process," *Economic and Political Weekly*, (Mumbai), Vol.39, No.28, 10-16 July 2004, pp.3092-3102.
29. *Ibid.*
30. Sara Tulloch (ed.), *The Oxford Dictionary & Thesaurus* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), p.1757.

31. Moonis Ahmar, "That Vision Thing" *The Times of India*, 3 August.