

**THE FINAL SETTLEMENT:
RESTRUCTURING INDIA-
PAKISTAN RELATIONS**
SUNDEEP WASLEKAR
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Now that president Musharraf has come and gone, insisting that the peace process that has been initiated has become "irreversible", when will Pakistan and India come to a "final settlement" of all issues that have so far divided them? How can Indo-Pakistan relations be restructured? Why did President Musharraf seek a meeting with Dr Manmohan Singh in the first place? Everybody was aware that Musharraf had something else in his mind when he expressed a desire to watch the last of the One day cricket matches to be played in Delhi. What was it? The last time Musharraf was in India it needlessly set passions aflame. This time Musharraf, on his own admission, came with a different heart. It is obvious that Musharraf has realised that, policy wise, Pakistan has come to the end of the road. It is in deep trouble and cannot afford to take on India whether militarily or otherwise.

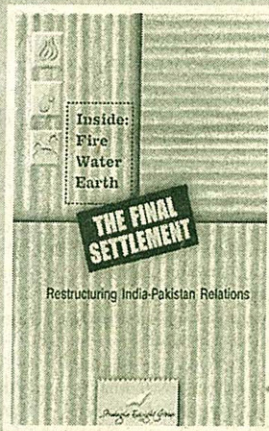
What The Final Settlement has done is to examine events in Pakistan in depth and bring out certain aspects of its existence in perspective. One thing evident is that it is in grave trouble internally. The Jihadi elements apparently are getting out of hand. There is trouble brewing in the provinces. Sundeep Waslekar who has been involved in Track Two diplomacy in the last few years has exposed certain developments in Pakistan that have seldom made headlines. For one thing he says that since 2000, soon

WATER-WAR BETWEEN PAKISTAN-KASHMIR

after Musharraf took over as the Chief Executive, Sind and Daluchistan have seen the flame of secession growing into a fire of moderate size which can transform itself into a full-blown inferno in 3-4 years, if the events of 2004-2005 are any indication. Between 2001-04, apparently, the supply of water to Sindh had been cut by 30 to 40 per cent every year. Due to an increasingly weak flow of Indus River the sea has been intruding in parts of the province causing salinity and other environmental problems. This was because waters of the Indus had been diverted upstream for use in the Punjab.

According to Waslekar "sea intrusion has destroyed 1.5 million acres of farmland, resulting in the evacuation of three commercial towns, extinction of certain species of fish and the loss of revenue to large numbers of farmers and fishermen".

The Sindhis have now come to the conclusion that their very existence is in peril, considering that about 88 per cent of agricultural land is affected by salinity and some 75 per cent of Sindh's ground water resources have become brackish. Pakistan now desperately needs fresh sources of water in areas where dams can be constructed. As a result, writes Waslekar, Pakistan has been proposing, through Track Two diplomacy that it should be given parts of the Kashmir valley and Jammu, so that it can have physical control on the Chenab basin. There is a direct conflict between Pakistan and the people of Jammu & Kashmir. The



latter have come to realise Pakistan's larger aims which include controlling the water resources upstream. Writes Waslekar: "Pakistan's interest is in having Kashmir as a semi-autonomous state, which cannot demand equal rights with other provinces, but which allows the federal government to exercise political control on its resources". No Kashmiri leader can possibly accept such a situation. Musharraf, in the circumstances, has to walk warily on political ground which would explain his change of heart. Besides, because of a faulty water policy adopted by selfish Punjabi elements in government, the flow of water in the Indus has been declining which could, according to Waslekar, compel Sindh to "start a civil war" - and Musharraf can hardly blame India if that happens. What is happening in Pakistan -

and of which India seems hardly aware of - is that "since 2001, a demand for even a further break-up of Pakistan has been gradually building up, with Sindh and Balochi leaders agitating for cessation in certain situations".

Actually, says Waslekar, a fresh partition of Pakistan would not be the end of the story since there are overt conflicts between Sindh and Mohajir communities in Sindh and a strong resentment against Punjabi domination that could further worsen the situation. In the circumstances, Musharraf was doing no favour to India by pleading for peace. He needs peace even more desperately than India. Again, in the last fifty years democracy has deepened in India whereas in Pakistan matters have been steadily worsening primarily because Pakistan had created a hydra-headed monster of terrorism and extremism that it now finds difficult to control. According to Waslekar, there presently are in Pakistan more than 100 jihadi organisations with a membership of more than a million young men. The number of armed militants is estimated to be around 200,000 while the official strength of the Pakistani army is around 620,000.

Waslekar says that while at the current rate the strength of the Armed Forces can at best rise to 650,000 by the end of 2010, during the same period jihadi forces can increase to 300,000 and infiltrate various institutions. Surely Musharraf is quite aware of the situation. There is no way he can control this menace. Waslekar

gives a reasonably full account of the ten largest jihadi and fundamentalist organisations now operating in Pakistan and planning to first capture the state itself before trying to attack to India. This may sound ridiculous, but jihadi forces have their own logic. What then is the answer to the feud between India and Pakistan over Kashmir? Pakistan has tried everything: war, open conflict, terrorism, sly infiltration as in Kargil, hostile propaganda, even official and unofficial third party mediation. And on all these fronts Pakistan had failed miserably. Where does one go from here? Says Waslekar:

"The time has now come to re-orient our politics, from that of power games, excuses, division and destruction to a process based on recognition of hard facts on the ground". But how does one re-orient national policies? Waslekar has his own concepts and he has detailed them in his work which is why it assumes vast significance. Waslekar is not interested in empty theories. He has studied the situation on the ground thoroughly and knows what he is talking about. As he sees it what needs to be done immediately consist of the following: Complete end to terrorism and brutal counter-terrorism measures, change in mindset in Pakistan about using Kashmiri youth as a tool to ensure Punjab's prosperity, acceptance by both India and Pakistan to treat Kashmir for the good of the Kashmir people, increase in efficiency in domestic water management and restoration of mutual trust and in efficiency in domestic water management and restoration of mutual trust and confidence between both countries. Musharraf may not succeed in putting an end to terrorism even if he wants to, but he has put the peace process firmly in motion. And that is what The Final Settlement is all about.