

Water of life

Inside: Fire Water Earth: The Final Settlement — Restructuring India-Pakistan Relations

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THE *Final Settlement*, published by the Mumbai-based Strategic Foresight Group of the International Centre for Peace Initiatives, deals with issues that need to be addressed and resolved for lasting peace between India and Pakistan. Although some of its contents revolve around the problems stemming from the partition of the subcontinent, it also provides insight into how India tried to cast its influence in the Asia-Pacific region and beyond.

The most interesting chapter in the book, dealing with the importance of the rivers flowing from Kashmir for both Pakistan and India, tells the story of a non-conventional strategic move by India to bring its nuclear adversary to its knees. Indian strategic thinkers describe this as the "restructuring" of Pakistan. The study analyzes the peace initiatives recently made by both countries for resolving the so-called core issue of Kashmir. It also explains why Kashmir is a jugular vein for Pakistan and the way in which India was trying to cut it. It was mainly due to the incompetence and short-sightedness of the rulers in Pakistan that expedited fragmentation. The water issue says a great deal about Pakistan's Chenab River formula which stems from General Pervez Musharraf's dissertation in

Royal College as a Brigadier in the early '90s.

The Kashmir issue, according to the study, has several dimensions. For India, it is a test of secularism, for Pakistan, it is a source of strategically important rivers and for the people of Jammu & Kashmir, it is a matter of living in peace with dignity. Therefore, the main requirement of the final settlement is to accept the "entirety of the India-Pakistan rivalry" and to deal with it. In this context, the author has stressed that Pakistan must give up its "non-India" identity with its roots in the conquest of Sindh by Mohammad bin Qasim or the Lahore Resolution (1940). He stresses that the people of Pakistan are, in fact, a part of the civilization that existed almost 5,000 years ago in today's India. The argument points at the acceptance of a dominant ideology, both religious and cultural, which was at variance with the philosophy of secularism.

The final settlement, the author says, will require "a mind-set change, whereby India defines a global role for itself in a way that carries Pakistan and other neighbours with it, as partners in progress, the way the United States is able to carry Canada, or France and Germany are able to carry Benelux." Thus, it is necessary to curb extremism in order to redefine the Indian and Pakistani identity.

Then there is a section in the book on water which, the author believes, can be the cause of future conflict between both countries. Since 1999 every proposal made by Pakistan through track-two diplomacy, either directly or indirectly, refers to "water as a core issue". According to the study, Pakistan's per capita water availability has declined from 5,600 cubic metres at the time of independence to 1,200 cubic metres in 2005. It is expected to reach the threshold level of 1,000 cubic metres before 2010 or perhaps even 2007. The groundwater table has decreased in 26 out of 45 canal commands. Due to the heavy silt load carried by the Indus, Pakistan's

water storage capacity is declining. A 50 per cent loss in the storage capacity is expected by 2010, making it difficult to support cotton sowing and wheat maturing. The author has also dealt at length with the controversy over the lack of water for Sindh and the objections raised by smaller provinces on Kalabagh Dam and the Greater Thal Canal projects.

Although the author has called for a realistic analysis of the water situation in the entire Indus River Basin, he has deliberately misinterpreted water as an issue between Pakistan and Jammu & Kashmir. After all, the Indus Water

Punjab, Haryana and Rajasthan.

Sundeep Waslekar maintains that there is a general misunderstanding that Pakistan wants to annex the Kashmir Valley for political reasons. This option would mean major disaster for Pakistan, as it will lose Chenab resulting in upto a 17 per cent reduction in the water flow. Also, the Indus Waters Treaty may stand dissolved. Punjab will not be affected much as it will continue to draw water from the Jhelum. As the flow of Indus will decline, Sindh will be compelled to start a civil war. Therefore, Pakistan is not interested

sharing of waters and the addition of Chenab and Jhelum would secure water availability for these states. The construction of a 103-metre-high dam on the Kishenganga River, also known as Neelum River in the Gurez valley was one indicator of the windfall gains India was anticipating. This project is located in the Baramula district of the Gurez valley of Jammu and Kashmir. The author has provided insight into reasons for Pakistan's objections to the planned project which aims to create a large reservoir. From that reservoir, a tunnel of 21.66km will be dug dropping the Kishenganga River into the Jhelum through Bonar Nala. This will redirect the Kishenganga waters to Wullar Lake at Bandipur, where a hydroelectric project will be constructed at the Wullar barrage. A distance of 100km will divert the river. The diversion of the water of Kishenganga River to Jhelum would ruin the Neelum valley in Pakistan. The project will reduce the Nauseri Weir by 27 per cent in the period from mid-September to mid-April, and in this way will adversely affect the ongoing Neelum-Jhelum hydroelectric project in Pakistan. IWT also forbids diversion of flow from one tributary to another of Jhelum River. Pakistan has also objected to the construction of Baghlihar Hydel Power Station in the catchment areas of the Chenab River upstream of the Salal Dam. Such projects could be the new unconventional Indian weapon against Pakistan and its other neighbours.

The study also suggests an alternative approach to the Indus treaty issue. It envisages an integrated development plan for the conservation of the Indus Basin. The plan, to be jointly developed by India and Pakistan, would involve a creative solution to the political dimension of the conflict in Jammu & Kashmir. It is imperative for both India and Pakistan to envisage comprehensive development and planning in the river basin. The move for self-rule in Kashmir should also be viewed in that perspective. ■



TO BE OR NOT TO BE: A physical model of Kalabagh dam

Treaty was imposed not to cater to the needs of the people of the disputed territory but to meet Indian Punjab's water needs through complete control over the three eastern rivers.

The construction of Mangla and Tarbela dams was envisaged as one of the projects to make up for the loss of three rivers to western Punjab, now part of Pakistan. India was also a signatory to the treaty that prevented Kashmiris from exploiting these rivers. This is a propagandist approach to provide justification for the various projects India has initiated on Chenab and Kishenganga (Neelum River), including their diversion and interlinking with the Sutlej Valley Irrigation System which caters to the needs of Indian

in merely Kashmir as it wants Kashmir plus those districts of Jammu that form the catchment area of the Chenab. According to him, India has identified nine sites on the Chenab for hydroelectricity. Dams can be built on it which could be bigger or comparable to Tarbela and Mangla dams in Pakistan. India, under the Indus Waters Treaty, can only build run-of-the-river hydroelectric stations. Therefore India is averse to the Chenab formula.

The opportunity to tap the Jhelum and Chenab Rivers by India would provide windfall gains not only to Jammu & Kashmir, but also to the neighbouring states of Punjab, Rajasthan and Haryana. The three states tend to be in conflict over the

been proposed that scientific reasoning was a product of Christianity and that without the Church, it would have all but disappeared. Freeman, on the other hand, attempts to prove the exact opposite — Christianity was in fact responsible for the subjugation of all rational and scientific thought; an important legacy of the Greek civilization. Freeman briefly traces the development of Greek intellectual tradition, deliberating on the works of Plato, Aristotle, Euclid and Pythagoras, among others. Science for the Greeks was a means to an end — the establishment of a just political system and social order — and so they continued to propagate scientific endeavours. The trend was reversed when Constantine became a Christian in the fourth century AD and made it the state religion of the Roman empire. From then on, the Church systematically sup-

pressed the voice of reason for the next 500 years or so.

The brilliance of Freeman's work lies not in his superb research, but in its diversity. The pagan philosophies and their subsequent assimilation into Christianity, the Church's visible unease with human sexuality (which is exceptionally prominent in St Augustine's treatise) and the corrupting influence that power had on the clerics and bishops all come together to provide a commonly known albeit "taboo" conclusion — all religions become dogmatic by virtue of the self-righteous zealots, who flagrantly exploit it to no end. Freeman's insight is nothing short of a revelation for the reader and the author certainly does a commendable job of dispelling myths that have surrounded conventional Christian thought for many centuries now.

Freeman misses out on an important point — the strong presence of Platonism in

Augustine's work, even though the latter's views on religion and life were largely pessimistic. It was because of this that Friedrich Nietzsche referred to Christianity as "Platonism for the masses". This is a glaring flaw in the author's work and may seriously damage the credibility of *The Western Mind*. Furthermore, the last chapter on Thomas Aquinas seems a little incomplete, not to mention hurried, and one feels that Freeman should have given more thought to the fact that Aquinas was not entirely successful in restoring reason within the Roman empire.

The Closing of the Western Mind may be a historical account of Christianity but it remains quite relevant especially when examined in the context of widespread "crimes of violence" today. It also poses a thought-provoking question: is religion really the opiate of the masses or is

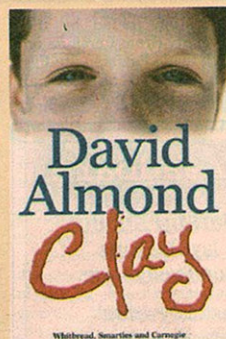
it merely a vessel for breeding dissent? ■ — *Samina Wahid Perozani*

Clay
By David Almond
Hodder
ISBN: 0340773847
304pp. £10.99

There's a reassuringly old-fashioned feel to David Almond's latest book, *Clay*, that gently lulls the reader into a cosy false sense of security. There are few, if any, outside events or references fixing the story in a particular moment in time. The fact that the child narrator is named Davie gives one a sense of Almond tapping into his own childhood. Then again, though set in the Northumberland village of Felling-on-Tyne, there's no reference to mining any more. Otherwise, this story is timeless. Or even out of time.

Enter Stephen Rose; his

father has died, his mother gone mad. Rumours abound that he was responsible for both occurrences. Sometimes Stephen denies this. Sometimes he doesn't. That this friendly newcomer isn't



the slightest bit worried should endeavor us to him. In a way it does. But, in Almond's skilful hands, it also makes us wary. Why is he so uncon-

cerned? And, while we're on the subject of skilful hands, Stephen has a God-given talent for modelling out of clay. Then again, it may not be God-given at all, of course. Stephen starts with miniature models, including some of the apostles, and tries to convince Davie that he can give his creations life. He certainly seems to make a clay baby move. Davie has seen it with his own eyes.

The thing is, Stephen also appears to be able to hypnotize his "distant aunt" Crazy Mary. Though a figure of fun in the village long before Stephen arrives, Davie is unhappy with the way that Stephen belittles her when she's under his influence.

As you'd expect from Almond's previous novels, *Clay* is dark and thought-provoking. This time around, though, there's no neatly tied-up ending. ■ — *Philip Ardagh (Dawn/Guardian News Service)*