

RAISON D' ETRE OF INDO-PAK CEASE FIRE: HYDRAULICS OF POLITICAL LEVERAGES

BY

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There is an air of optimism with the news of prospects of cease fire on LOC and IB between India and Pakistan. The fact that the request has come from none other than the DGMO of Pakistan army goes to suggest the effectiveness of Indian retaliation to the mischievous Pakistani designs in J&K. **Declaration of suspension of operations in J&K in the holy month of Ramadan by the government as a follow up of military ascendancy has yielded right political message across the borders.** There are obvious political leverages in play on both sides, albeit seemingly in right direction for a change as of now. There are tell tale signs of thaw on the horizon, possibly due to convergence of reciprocal positive synergies as a way out of the current political deadlock.

The religion centric psyche of Pakistani society has surely welcomed the suspension of operation cutting across the politico-military barriers. **The declaration, per se, has been targeted to provide some relief to the citizen of J&K form the cycle of militant driven societal upheaval, but its seem to have touched the sensitivities across the borders also.** The subtle political message has struck the right chords despite attempts of Pakistan army to exploit the situation through regular troops on the border, and non state actors in the Indian hinter land.

The idea of attaining position of strength by Pakistan army through such tactics has once again not yielded results. **Had Pakistan continued their triad of military, militants and diplomatic aggressiveness in the face of such an Indian accommodating gestures, the schism between military and civil society would have further increased.** The statements given out by the three time elected civilian prime minister **Nawaz Sharif has already exposed afflictions of Pakistan army with the non state actors** lowering national prestige.

The Pakistan army bluff of self created narrative of Indian hegemony in order to retain their primacy in the national polity is also getting diluted by the day. Therefore, the Pakistan army is also under cloud and needs a bale out to

showcase their sensitivity and relevance in national affairs. The cease fire proposal by Pakistan probably has this intangible linkage also.

Coupled with above, complicity of Pakistan in terrorism is a matter of grave concern to the international community. As a consequence, Pakistan is already under pressure from the US as well as China to scale down their patronage of the terror groups both in Afghanistan, India and elsewhere. US has already put Pakistan on warning to do more to curb the terrorism and wind up their Taliban and Haqqani networks. **The Pakistan is facing the heat from the US which they cannot afford to further antagonize.** Pakistan needs to win back US patronage in order to restore their power balance, plus a mechanism for their strategic relevance in the region. Accordingly, **Pakistan has compulsion to keep their Eastern border quiet in order to concentrate on their pro US Afghanistan commitments.**

China, for the first time, has agreed to put Pakistan in the list of countries under international observation for their involvement in supporting the terrorism. Chinese plans for their economic expansion through CPEC scheme are getting impacted due to Pakistani anti India obsession and their Jihadi afflictions in the Af-Pak region. Accordingly, China has been repeatedly nudging Pakistan to sort out their political issues with India through bilateral mechanism. **Pakistan**, with no other reliable supporter as on date, **is under Chinese pressure to lower the ante on the Indo-Pak border.**

Pakistan is going in for general elections in the month of July with a caretaker government getting into chair from 01 June onwards. In the given circumstances, Pakistan cannot afford to get overly entangled militarily with India which seemed to be the case looking at the scale and ferocity of retaliation by Indian army in recent times. Moreover, the population in the border areas is suffering badly due to firing across to border which includes the artillery guns also. If the situation is not managed by the government to provide relief to the border areas, the ruling party is likely to suffer in their forthcoming electoral battle. Therefore, **probable reason for expediency in request for ceasefire by Pakistani DGMO a day prior to the last day of the current Pakistani government in office.**

The elections are also due in India in 2019 and the ruling party is under pressure to show their achievements as regards to relations with China and Pakistan. While Indian authorities are in constant touch with their counterparts in China, there are no such contacts at political level with Pakistan. The government policy of not to talk to Pakistan till they shun their support to

terrorism is under flak from the opposition parties for quite some time. There are varied opinions as regards to merits of breaking the current deadlock as there is no perceptible change in Pakistani behaviour and intentions.

Pakistan has been under pressure from their internal constituency to initiate talks as it is not in the interest of Pakistan to continue with the futile military charade which has impacted on their economic growth. **It cannot happen till a new government takes office and is inclined to take initiative to reach out to India to break the ice.** There will be a period less than a year for such an exercise before India also goes in for elections, hence time sensitivity of the issue.

The thaw between India and Pakistan and resumption of talks prior to the Indian general elections would showcase success of foreign policy of the ruling party. Therefore, the Indian government is expected to open up towards Pakistan here after in order shape the political canvas to create conducive environment for reopening the dialogue. Accordingly, both the countries are expected to ensure that sanctity of the LOC and IB is maintained, this being a requisite term of reference for moving forward towards reconciliation process.

The Indian government seems to have followed an appropriate strategy which has been effective and expected to yield positive synergies in times to come. However, looking at the past pattern of unpredictability of Pakistan, one cannot be complacent, hence need to keep the powder dry.

There are few whispers in the corridors of power in Pakistan which sound sensible for a change. We need to support and encourage them for the purpose of regional peace and tranquility. Let the cease fire stay as the destiny of the region lies in its longevity.

Disclaimer: Views expressed are of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of CENJOWS.

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