



CENTRE for AEROSPACE & SECURITY STUDIES



India-Pakistan Ceasefire on LoC: What Next?

Dialogue Analysis

CENTRE for AEROSPACE & SECURITY STUDIES
June 2021

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Executive Summary

The Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS) organized an International Webinar on 'India-Pakistan Ceasefire on LoC: What Next?' on 3 June 2021. Speakers from Pakistan and India critically evaluated whether the 26 February 2021 Joint Statement issued by the Director Generals of Military Operations (DGMOs) of Pakistan and India was just another Confidence Building Measure (CBM) or could pave the way for a comprehensive dialogue on all security issues between the two countries. In the statement a ceasefire and an agreement to discuss core issues of concern was announced. Speakers hoped that backchannel talks would lead towards rapprochement. However, there was consensus that optimism was overshadowed by genuine scepticism due to various obstacles and roadblocks in the way of this process.

The ceasefire announcement appeared to be driven by external pressure rather than internal consensus to achieve peace through dialogue due to unconfirmed reports of third country involvement in brokering this new amelioration process in South Asia.

While the peace effort was a welcome step and seen as a sign of hope, it needed to be accompanied by a mutual desire for peace. Without India taking substantive action to bring some relief to Kashmiri people and create a conducive environment for talks, any such engagement was unlikely to be sustainable.

Speakers also pointed out that longevity of the ceasefire and initiation of a result-oriented peace process would depend on political commitment at the highest level whereby Prime Minister Narendra Modi would have to review his approach to the Kashmir dispute and aggressive posture towards Pakistan. They recommended that formalization of the ceasefire in the form of a verifiable agreement; respite for the Kashmiris in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K) by ending the lockdown; release of political prisoners; and their involvement in the peace process, was necessary in order to carry the February agreement forward in a positive direction.

India must stop bringing settlers to make demographic changes in Jammu and Kashmir and revert the status of this disputed territory to its pre-5th August 2019 status.

Key Takeaways

- Pakistan and India require strong political will at the highest level as well as the support of political parties, civil society, media, and the international community, particularly the United States (US) to defuse tensions and move the peace process forward.
- Issues between the two countries are challenging but not insurmountable since despite recent hostilities and tensions, they had been able to resolve some of their issues in the past.
- Political parties in India should refrain from making Pakistan-India issues an electoral gambit.
- Even if Pakistan does not make reversal (of the 5 August 2019 decision), a condition for resuming dialogue with India, the latter is unlikely to show flexibility in resolving other disputes including Siachen, Sir Creek, and transboundary water-sharing.
- The notion that enhancing trade between India and Pakistan is the panacea for resolving the latter's economic woes needs to be carefully examined. In the past, any increase in trade volume disproportionately benefitted India. Moreover, Pakistan's economic challenges were a function of both internal and external factors such as governance and corruption; poor interprovincial coordination; short-sighted economic policies; uncertainty and instability in Afghanistan; Iran- related sanctions; strained trade relations with the Middle East; and imbalance in Pakistan-US relations. India is only one factor amongst these.
- India's interest in resuming dialogue with Pakistan is aimed at gradually and incrementally formalizing the post-5 August 2019 political *status quo* in IIOJ&K, in diplomatic, economic, and military domains as well. Its assumptions are that Pakistan has exhausted its international diplomacy; Kashmiris are reluctantly and slowly resigning themselves to the new realities; and their expectations from Pakistan have also dwindled.
- News of resumption of Pakistan-India dialogue has led to unfavorable reactions from the Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control (LoC) and deepened apprehensions that any dialogue in a bilateral framework may not consider their voice and interests. Any decision on this issue will require consideration of India's domestic political environment; Kashmiri sentiments, particularly of those directly involved in the freedom struggle; Indian military thinking; as well as taking the Chinese on-board.

- There are three scenarios which can be used to comparatively analyze the purpose of any meaningful Pakistan-India dialogue. These are:
 1. Conflict resolution,
 2. Conflict/crisis management, and,
 3. Normalization of the *status quo*.

The first is ideal from Pakistan's perspective; the second is more realistic and internationally supported, while the third represents Indian interests which is unacceptable to Pakistan and undesirable by Kashmiris.

- The current interest in Pakistan-India relations seems to be primarily driven by the US administration's larger geostrategic interest in reducing hostilities between the two, to manage rather than resolving the Jammu & Kashmir issue in a manner that can enable New Delhi to divert its conventional and strategic capabilities and forces towards China, as part of Washington's 'Indo-Pacific' strategy. However, Pakistan's role in facilitating the Afghan peace process offers Islamabad some leverage in terms of expecting Washington to nudge New Delhi to show greater restraint and some flexibility towards the Kashmir issue. This also includes being more considerate of Pakistan's economic interests, particularly in the context of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and negotiations with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and The World Bank.
- Opening Pakistan's market to Indian goods is not a sufficient incentive for the BJP government to review and roll back its 5 August 2019 decision and actions.

Policy Directions

- It is necessary to appoint High Commissioners in India and Pakistan.
- For any future dialogue with India, Pakistan must follow the principles of reciprocity. Pakistan should have clearly defined realistic objectives. A cost-benefit analysis should also be done before agreeing to an agenda. This should consider the regional and international geopolitical environment and Indian interests.
- Hasty decision-making on key issues related to Pakistan-India relations should be avoided. All areas, including trade should be discussed in the Federal Cabinet in an inclusive manner that allows stakeholders to comprehensively deliberate this critical and delicate relationship.
- It is prudent to have a sustainable and quiet backchannel at an appropriate level with India that ensures that any incident or crisis does not escalate between the two nuclear-armed neighbors and both countries manage their hard power responsibly.
- Pakistan should strengthen its diplomatic efforts to keep pressure on India to bring some relief to the Kashmiri people in Indian Illegally Occupied Jammu & Kashmir (IIOJ&K).
- Pakistan needs to actively engage with Kashmiri leadership on both sides to ensure they do not feel abandoned in any future decisions.

Discussion Analysis

Future of India and Pakistan Relations: Pakistan's Perspective

Ms Hina Rabbani Khar, 26th Foreign Minister of Pakistan

Ms Hina Rabbani Khar provided a critical assessment of developments in India-Pakistan relations over the past few years and shared her views on the LoC ceasefire agreement. She started her talk with a word of caution on possibility of any cordiality between India-Pakistan and observed that the current process was 'engineered' rather than organic.

Smart Diplomacy

Ms Khar insisted on using smart diplomacy and was of the view that the post-1971 generation had turned a new leaf.

Smart diplomacy is about giving up of old positions in an environment that is no longer suitable for the country. The purpose of foreign policy of any state is to extract benefits for its people. If a certain policy fails to accomplish that task, holding on to it is not smart diplomacy, e.g., opening trade with India despite the Kashmir issue.

Elephant in the Room – Kashmir

Ms. Khar stated that the reason of current tensions and non-cordiality between India Pakistan was the worsening situation in Kashmir post-5 August 2019. She asserted that resolution of Kashmir issue was possible as per the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolutions given there was political will. She reminded the audience that the Kashmir issue was taken to the UN by India and not Pakistan.

Basket of Colonial Problems

Ms Khar drew the attention to the basket of problems that the British colonizers left India and Pakistan with. She lamented that the basket had become heavier with issues such as Siachen, Samjhauta Express, Pulwama, Mumbai and Sir Creek rather than becoming lighter. However, she was hopeful that these issues, especially the two territorial disputes - Siachen and Sir Creek - could be resolved within days, given there was a will to do that.

Lack of Decision-Making and Missed Opportunities

The cost of lack of decision-making is haunting. This cost, that both sides continue to pay, should haunt those who have held or continue to hold office in India and Pakistan.

In this regard, she recalled the martyrdom of 129 Pakistani soldiers and 11 civilians in a massive avalanche at the military camp in Gayari near the Siachen Glacier which was not the result of kinetic war. She also expressed concern regarding the challenges the unforgiving terrain unleashed on the Indian soldiers as well; and questioned if such a cost borne by both sides was fair and justifiable. Ms Khar also briefly mentioned the five failed dialogues between India and Pakistan in the past, from the Swaran Singh-Z.A. Bhutto dialogue, Benazir Bhutto-Rajiv Gandhi dialogue, Pervez Musharraf-A.T. Vajpaye, Musharraf-Manmohan Singh dialogue, and the Asif Ali Zardari-Manmohan Singh dialogue.

Article 370

Ms Khar stressed that the Indian government would have to reverse its position on Article 370 in Jammu and Kashmir or initiate the process of reversal for any normalization process to begin between India and Pakistan.

It would not suit Pakistan to let Kashmir burn and be brutalized since the human rights violations by India were mounting and rape had become a weapon of the oppressor.

Even the bare minimum, such as healthcare during the pandemic and internet facilities had been taken away from the residents. She pointed out that it would be ‘delusional’ to think that any normalization beyond the LoC ceasefire would happen through back channels without India’s reversal of Article 370. In her considered opinion, it would never be acceptable to the people of Pakistan.

Scope of Flexibility between India Pakistan

On the issue of flexibility in Pakistan-India’s stance, she maintained that as long as right-wing entities, such as Prime Minister Modi’s BJP, were in power, chances of normalization were implausible.

Mr Modi would be willing to sacrifice the future of India for his personal future by igniting antagonism against Muslims and Pakistan.

She shared her concerns about the rise of right-wing parties across the world in countries like the United States, Austria, Germany, and the United Kingdom. She stressed that Pakistan had also witnessed such an era during General Zia’s regime.

If there is political will in the leadership to do what is right for the country, one can hope for normalization of the bilateral relationship.

Pakistan's Shift from Geostrategic to Geo-economics

According to Ms Khar, the shift from geostrategic to geo-economics, as part of Pakistan's foreign policy outlook, had been happening for a long time, but now it was being articulated more loudly. She suggested that Pakistan and India should untangle themselves from their 'wicked historical memories' and carve out a new path based on economic development and peaceful co-existence. Unfortunately, she said that whenever the two states have moved one step forward in any peace dialogue, they have also moved five steps backward – a harbinger of bleak chances of peaceful co-existence in the future.

Lowered Bar of Expectations in Bilateral Relations

Ms Khar lamented that while the recent LoC agreement was being touted as a major development, ten years ago, both countries were on the verge of resolving far more substantive issues.

At the moment, there is nothing to celebrate between India and Pakistan. Today, relations between the two states have deteriorated to the extent that they do not even have High Commissioners in the respective capitals.

On Prime Minister Modi

Ms Khar was of the view that Prime Minister Modi had carved for himself the identity of a troublemaker vis-à-vis Pakistan. He achieved electoral success by keeping the Mumbai attack alive, while Pakistan could not forget Pulwama where India violated the country's territorial boundary for the first time since 1971. She compared Modi with Nehru, Manmohan Singh and Vajpayee and regretted that he was not of the same stature as a statesman.

If Prime Minister Modi could transform himself into a statesman and normalize relations between India and Pakistan - if that were to happen - Pakistan would not leave any stone unturned, and would in fact, sprint towards the opportunity for normalization of relations.

US-Withdrawal from Afghanistan and Pakistan-India Normalization

Discussing Afghanistan, Ms Khar said that the latter was a huge and a realistic concern for Pakistan as it shared a 2500 km long border with Afghanistan, as well as hosted millions of Afghan refugees.

Any turmoil in Afghanistan today would have direct consequences for Pakistan. Pakistan has immense concerns about India using Afghan territory against her as it did in the past. There are proofs and documents of Indian involvement that cannot be disregarded.

Nevertheless, she spoke positively about the future of Afghanistan and indicated that the country presents a great opportunity for the entire region.

Pakistan has only one goal about Afghanistan - peace and stability and to avoid spill over effects of war. It is time to start a new chapter as foreign forces evacuate the region and to work with other states such as Iran, China, India, and Central Asian Republics that have a vast stake in Afghanistan.

Significance of India-Pakistan Ceasefire and Backchannel Talks

Dr Happymon Jacob, Associate Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), India

The Indian speaker covered four key areas in his discussion: significance of the ceasefire agreement; status of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan; importance of backchannel talks; and situational analysis of Jammu and Kashmir.

Significance of the February 2021 Ceasefire

Dr Jacob highlighted the significance of the February 2021 ceasefire which, according to him, was one of the most significant military measures by India and Pakistan in the past 18 years.

2020 witnessed a great spike in ceasefire violations, and the ceasefire agreement proved to be instrumental in halting violence at the Line of Control. This has been a big achievement.

In his view, the agreement was a carefully put together and calibrated start towards normalization of relations between India and Pakistan. Despite successful implementation of the ceasefire agreement, he pressed upon the need of a written agreement as he feared that the verbal ceasefire agreement between the DGMOs would not last long.

Current Status of Bilateral Relations: Controlled Calm

Commenting on the status of bilateral relations between India and Pakistan, Dr Jacob remarked that both sides had mutually decided to avoid moving the bilateral

relationship forward. Referring to the current situation as 'controlled calm' and hoping for its continuation, he added that this calm was bereft of good will towards each other, major engagements between the two, and keen desire to resolve conflicts. At the same time, he was of the view that these factors could also turn this controlled calm into a fragile one.

The public in both India and Pakistan are not clear about the next steps of their respective government, primarily because of COVID-19. Both countries' political and diplomatic capitals are occupied with tackling COVID-19 and its consequences. Hence, there are little chances of a dialogue process soon.

Nonetheless, the agreement was a good start in his opinion.

Importance of Backchannel Talks

Commenting on the significance of backchannel talks, he was of the view that the ceasefire had been made possible because of these talks. If both sides wanted to ensure broad-based bilateral talks, then they must give space to each other's narrative/ thinking.

India would prefer to discuss trade and other less difficult issues, such as Sir Creek.

Article 370

On the issue of Jammu and Kashmir and restoration of Article 370, he was not hopeful. However, at the same time, he was of the view that statehood could be returned to the state of Jammu and Kashmir as a part of negotiated process.

If things were normalized in Kashmir, Islamabad may be open to talks with India. In such a scenario, Article 370 might not be a big hindrance.

Role of Leadership

Former Soviet Union and the United States, who were both ideological rivals, managed to co-exist and engage during the Cold War and entered into various agreements. That is the beauty of diplomacy.

Talking about Modi, he felt that as the Prime Minister, he had taken certain cordial measures such as inviting former Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif to his Swearing-In Ceremony and visited him despite his party's opposition. However, the situation became erratic after Pathankot and Uri attacks.

Looking Ahead Approach

Dr Jacob asserted that India and Pakistan were independent nations and they should deal with each other as independent sovereign states and treat each other as neighbours without any revisionist sentiments. He shared his optimism about the possibility of positive outcomes notwithstanding India's domestic policy issues. He advised not to focus too much on domestic politics and stressed that even in the most difficult of circumstances, there was a way of getting around very complicated issues. He recommended that it was important to:

- Appoint High Commissioners in India and Pakistan.
- Start with less complicated issues, such as re-opening borders for trade at the LoC and Wagha-Atari border.
- Initiate LoC trade between India and Pakistan in Kashmir.

India and Pakistan: Way Forward

Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani (Retd), Director, Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Pakistan

Ambassador Jalil Abbas Jilani discussed that despite the lapse of more than seven decades, Pakistan and India continue to have unresolved issues and disputes. Both countries have a history of mistrust, hostility, and lost opportunities.

Scope of Pakistan-India Relations

According to the Ambassador, the question whether Pakistan and India were destined to remain adversaries forever, needed to be addressed with seriousness at all levels since the issues between the two countries were not insurmountable. Despite hostility and tension, the two sides had been able to resolve some of the difficult issues. He added that when the peace process was initiated in 2003 to 2007, discussions on the resolution of difficult issues, including Jammu and Kashmir, Siachen, Sir Creek, water, and terrorism, were held. During 2007, significant progress was made, and the two countries were close to a resolution. Unfortunately, the process was disrupted due to the judicial crises in Pakistan and the terror attacks in Mumbai in 2008.

2021 Ceasefire: Military Achievement

The February ceasefire was a very positive development because it had rekindled hope amongst the people of the two countries.

A beginning had been made after a gap of many years where no discussion was taking place at any level to resolve disputes or lower temperature between the two countries.

Role of Domestic and International Actors:

He went on to say that the two countries needed strong political will at the highest level as well as the support of political parties, civil society, media, and the international community to defuse tensions and to move towards peace. In the past, the international community, particularly the US and UK had played a significant role in defusing tensions and moving forward the peace process between the two countries.

Vajpayee Model of *Insaniyat* (Humanity) and *Jamhuriyat* (Democracy)

Ambassador Jilani suggested that for the peace process to become meaningful, Prime Minister Modi should follow the footsteps of his predecessor Prime Minister Vajpayee, and perhaps things could move forward in a much better fashion. He stated that in April 2003, Prime Minister Vajpayee during his visit to Indian Occupied Kashmir made a very important statement while addressing the Kashmiris. He had said that 'We would like to resolve the Kashmir dispute in accordance with *Insaniyat* and *Jamhuriyat*.' Ambassador Jilani noted that this was the kind of spirit that was needed in the politics of India today.

Pakistan - An Electoral Slogan in India

The former Foreign Secretary stressed that India's political parties should refrain from making Pakistan-India matters, an electoral issue which had been happening for many decades.

In Pakistan, political parties do not use Pakistan-India issues as an electoral slogan.

Need for Compromise and Flexibility

Both Pakistan and India needed to learn from their past mistakes and realize that war was not an option; and peace could not be achieved by brushing aside difficult issues like Kashmir, Siachen, and water. It was because of these difficult issues that

whatever progress was made between the two countries was retarded. Moreover, current Indian leadership needed to overcome its wooden-headed approach to resolve disputes.

Dealing with Terrorism

Ambassador Jilani noted that terrorists and their supporters thrive in an environment of tension and that should be discouraged. Earlier, there was an understanding between India and Pakistan that incidents of terrorism would not be allowed to derail the peace process. One way to discourage extremists and terrorists was to revive the spirit of that agreement that had taken place in the past.

Involvement of Kashmiris in the Peace Process

Pakistan cannot visualize a solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute without involving the Kashmiris.

Pakistan and India had involved the Kashmiris in the dialogue process during 2003 and 2007. Kashmiris were regularly consulted from both sides of the LoC. India had allowed the Hurriyat leaders from across the LoC to visit Pakistan to consult with Pakistani politicians, civil society, and media. This was no longer the case.

Negative Perceptions and Way Forward

While responding to a question regarding ways to overcome the strong negative perceptions about each other in both countries and the way forward, Ambassador Jilani said that both sides needed to take bold decisions, show political will to start a peace process, and to sanctify the ceasefire agreement into a more formal arrangement to avoid inadvertent crisis in the future.

Jammu and Kashmir-related Confidence Building Measures (CBMs)

Ambassador Jilani maintained that the restoration of *status quo* in Jammu and Kashmir was not difficult, especially if it was done through the Supreme Court. He added that revival of Jammu & Kashmir-related CBMs was very important.

Role of Media

Media in India and Pakistan follow the lines given by their respective governments when it comes to Pakistan-India issues.

The Indian media was as nationalistic as Pakistan's, but if a positive statement came from the leadership of either country, media automatically highlights positive stories about the respective states. This atmosphere was needed in letter and spirit.

Lack of Transparency in Current Dialogue Process

On lack of transparency in the current dialogue process, Ambassador Jilani stated that a transparent dialogue would need to be a formal one. But any discussion that took place between interlocutors in the backchannel needed a certain degree of confidentiality, otherwise the discussion may become a subject of media and political speculation and lose track before achieving any results. He shared the case of the 2003 and 2007 process that achieved positive results such as the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus service but had to remain discreet. Even on terrorism, both countries were able to establish a very suitable backchannel and based on inputs provided by Pakistan, India was able to act before a terrorist attack could take place.

From Multilateralism to Bilateralism

On Jammu and Kashmir being relegated to a bilateral issue from a multilateral one, Ambassador Jilani said that even during bilateral discussions, the idea was always to come up with out-of-the-box solutions to break the logjam; to come up with a solution which was acceptable to the Kashmiris, Indians, and Pakistanis. At the same time, he stressed that the UN Security Council resolutions remained the basic framework under which those discussions took place.

China and the Kashmir Dispute

While addressing a question about Chinese claim over Ladakh, Ambassador Jilani remarked that the Jammu and Kashmir dispute needed to be resolved between India and Pakistan, otherwise the situation would get more complicated for both countries. He added that India-Pakistan dispute on Kashmir had been a bilateral dispute since 1948 and it still was. However, with the new developments, China was also emerging as a third party to this dispute. Nonetheless, he urged that it was important to resolve the dispute as quickly as possible to the satisfaction of the Kashmiris as well as people of India and Pakistan.

Concluding Remarks

Air Marshal Farhat Hussain Khan (Retd), Deputy President, Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Pakistan

In his *Concluding Remarks*, Air Marshal Farhat Hussain Khan thanked the panel for the candid discussion. He acknowledged that India-Pakistan relations were marred with tensions and rivalry and discussed some of the recent events which had a negative impact on this relationship such as Balakot strikes and reversal of Article 35A and 370 in August 2019. These acts had brought a wave of miseries to the people of Jammu and Kashmir.

Commenting on India's political environment, Air Marshal Khan said that Prime Minister Narendra Modi showed a deviation from the philosophies of the previous governments. According to him, Modi was more inclined towards the RSS philosophy rather than Atal Bihari Vajpayee's philosophy of *Insaniyat* and *Jamhuriyat*. On the contrary, from the very beginning, Pakistan's Prime Minister Imran Khan had called for resolution of all disputes in a peaceful manner.

About the LoC ceasefire agreement, the Deputy President affirmed that it was a positive development. However, he said that:

More progress cannot be expected from the ceasefire until the status of Jammu and Kashmir is restored.

He concluded that India needed to show sincerity if it claimed to be a partner in peace. India needed to:

1. End human rights violations in IIOJ&K and give people their fundamental rights, as a first step.
2. Stop bringing settlers to make demographic changes in IIOJ&K.
3. Revert status of IIOJ&K to pre-5th August 2019.
4. Assume process of Composite Dialogue to resolve issues through peaceful means.

Annexures

Annexure 1

Profiles of Speakers

Air Marshal Farhat Hussain Khan (Retd) is the Deputy President, Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Pakistan. He was commissioned in GD (P) Branch of the PAF, in March 1977. After commissioning, he served as a fighter pilot in various frontline fighter squadrons. During his service, he remained on various important command and staff appointments. His command assignments included command of a fighter squadron, a fighter wing and an operational PAF airbase. His appointments at Air Headquarters included Additional Director General (ADG) Air Force Strategic Command, Chief Project Director of JF-17 program and Vice Chief of the Air Staff, an appointment he held till his retirement in July 2013. He has also served as Chairman Pakistan Aeronautical Complex Board (PACB) at Kamra. He has been President Ski Federation of Pakistan, on CAA Board and Chairman Monitoring Committee of Islamabad and Multan Airports. The Air Marshal has also served as Pakistan's Air Attaché at New Delhi, India. Air Marshal Farhat has qualified various professional courses including Combat Commanders' Course, Air War Course and National Defence Course. He holds two Master's degrees, one from the University of Karachi and one in Defense and Strategic Studies from the National Defence University, Pakistan. He is the co-author of two books "The Aviation City" and "Milestones" about the growth of military aviation industry in Pakistan and its way forward. After retirement from service, he started work on building Pakistan's Aircraft Manufacturing Industries with a civilian partner in the private sector. He is the sitting Chairman of Scaled Aviation Pvt Ltd, the first and only aircraft manufacturing industry in Pakistan, presently engaged in manufacturing two-seat trainers, and has ventured into designing a purely indigenous six-seat aircraft. He is a recipient of Sitara-i-Imtiaz (Military), Hilal-i-Imtiaz (Military) and Sitara-i-Basalat.



Ms Hina Rabbani Khar

26th Foreign Minister of Pakistan

Twice elected Member of Parliament, Hina Rabbani Khar's term as Foreign Minister is best remembered for the "Regional Pivot" to Pakistan's foreign policy. As the 26th Foreign Minister of Pakistan, she concentrated on building ties with Pakistan's immediate neighbours. A major policy shift was taken by starting the journey of normalization of trade relations with India. Similarly, with Afghanistan, Pakistan pursued a policy of reaching out to all political parties, and ethnicities. The country also pursued an active role in an Afghan-led and Afghan-owned process of reconciliation. In a difficult time of increasing economic sanctions, Pakistan pursued cementing ties with Iran. Hina Rabbani Khar has also served as Minister of State for Economic Affairs for 4 years and Minister of State for Finance & Economic Affairs for another 2 years. During these years, she led Pakistan's bilateral and multilateral economic diplomacy.



Dr Happymon Jacob

Associate Professor, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), India

Dr Happymon Jacob is Associate Professor of Diplomacy and Disarmament at the School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU), India. Prior to joining JNU in 2008, he held teaching positions at the University of Jammu in J&K and Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi; and research positions at the Centre for Air Power Studies, Delhi Policy Group, and Observer Research Foundation. Dr Jacob is an elected member of the Pugwash Council since 2013. He is the author of "Line on Fire: Ceasefire Violations and India-Pakistan Escalation Dynamics" (Oxford University Press, 2019), and "Line of Control: Traveling with the Indian and Pakistani Armies" (Penguin Viking, 2018). His concurrent engagements with the Indian media include a column with *The Hindu* and hosting of weekly video show on national security on *The Wire*. He recently co-founded the New Delhi-based think tank Council for Strategic and Defense Research (CSDR).



Ambassador (Retd) Jalil Abbas Jilani

Director, Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Pakistan & Former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan

Ambassador (Retd) Jalil Abbas Jilani has 38 years of bilateral and multilateral experience as a career diplomat, having served as Pakistan's Ambassador to the United States, Belgium, Luxembourg and the EU, and Australia. Ambassador Jilani also served as the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan as the top civil service official in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He is a specialist in South Asian affairs and has worked as Director General for South Asia



and SAARC, Deputy/Acting High Commissioner to India and Director (India) in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. In 2018, the Government of Pakistan nominated Ambassador Jilani as member of the Experts and Eminent Persons Group (EEP) of the ASEAN Regional Forum and later in 2019, as member of the Prime Minister's Advisory Council on Foreign Affairs. Most recently, Ambassador Jilani has served as a Senior Fellow at the International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), UK and the United States Institute of Peace (USIP), USA.

Ms Sitara Noor

Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Pakistan



Ms Sitara Noor is a Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS), Islamabad, Pakistan. Previously, Ms Noor was a Research Fellow at the Vienna Centre for Disarmament and Non-Proliferation (VCDNP) in Vienna, Austria (2016-17). Prior to joining the VCDNP, she worked at the Pakistan Nuclear Regulatory Authority as an International Relations Analyst. She has served as a faculty member at the National University of Modern Languages for two years. She was also a visiting faculty at the National University of Science and Technology (NUST), Quaid-i-Azam University, the Foreign Services Academy of Pakistan, and the Information Services Academy of Pakistan. She was also a South Asian Voices Visiting Fellow at the Stimson Centre, Washington DC (2019-20), Visiting Fellow at Sandia National labs (2019 & 2013) and James Martin Center for Nonproliferation, Monterey, California (2013). She is serving as the Country Coordinator for the University of Gothenburg project “Variety of Democracy” since 2012.

Annexure 2

Press Release

India-Pakistan Ceasefire on LoC: What Next?

For meaningful and result-oriented dialogue between Pakistan and India, restoration of status quo ante in Jammu and Kashmir as it existed prior to August 5, 2019, an end to India's hostile narrative and a positive role by the government and its media, would be required.



This was the major conclusion of the interactive webinar on "India-Pakistan Ceasefire on LoC: What Next?" organized by the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies (CASS) here in Islamabad.

Speakers from Pakistan and India critically evaluated whether the February 26, 2021 joint statement issued by the Director Generals Military Operations of Pakistan and India announcing a ceasefire and an agreement to discuss core issues of concern was just another Confidence Building Measure or could pave the way for a comprehensive dialogue on all security issues between the two countries. Speakers from both sides of the border hoped that backchannel talks would lead towards rapprochement. However, there was consensus that optimism was overshadowed by genuine scepticism due to various obstacles and roadblocks in the way of this process, especially India's abrogation of Jammu and Kashmir's special status and worsening human rights violations in the Valley.

In her Introductory Remarks, **Ms Sitara Noor**, Senior Research Fellow at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies, observed that while any peace effort should be welcomed, it must be accompanied by mutual desire for peace.

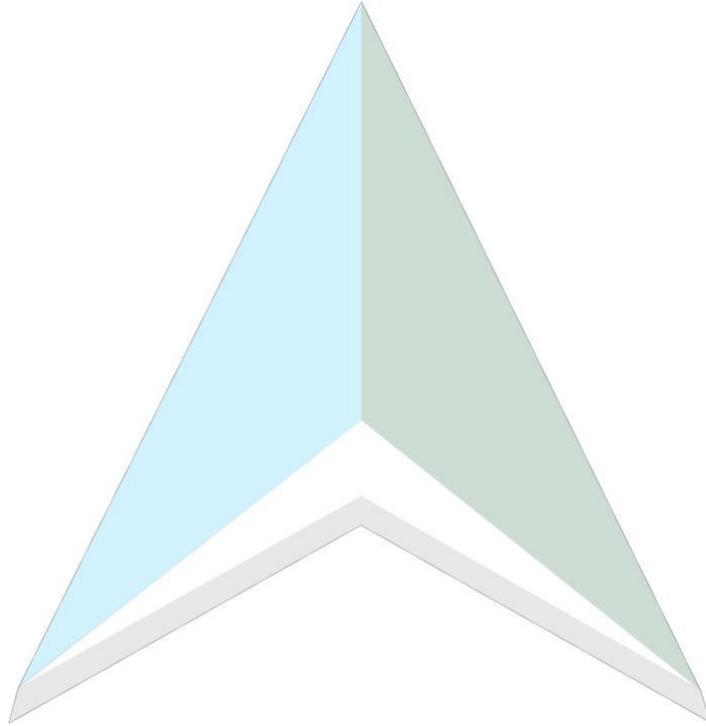
Pakistan's 26th Foreign Minister **Ms Hina Rabbani Khar** emphasized that if rapprochement or normalization beyond the LoC was to happen, India would have to reverse its 5th August 2019 position. Without this reversal or even starting the process of reversal, no forward movement would be possible since the streets of Pakistan would never support it, nor would it suit the state of Pakistan. According to her, smart diplomacy was about converting negotiations into serious benefits for the people of the country and serving national interests. On US troops' withdrawal from Afghanistan, she said that Pakistan has always had immense

concerns about India using Afghanistan as a platform to launch attacks inside the country, and documentation about these concerns had been shared with international organizations as well as bilaterally with the Indians.

According to **Dr Happymon Jacob**, Associate Professor of Diplomacy and Disarmament Studies, School of International Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, India, the current ceasefire agreement between Pakistan and India was one of the most important developments in the last 18 years. In this regard, the informal backchannel negotiations had played a key role, he said, and hence, should be appreciated. He was of the view that India may, in the near future, be willing to talk with Pakistan on trade and other less difficult issues such as Sir Creek. However, on Kashmir, the Indian side might go slow. Dr Jacob also pointed out that Article 370 was unlikely to be returned to the state of Jammu and Kashmir. However, he said that there was a real possibility today that statehood would be returned to Jammu & Kashmir as part of a negotiated process.

Ambassador (Retd) Jalil Abbas Jilani, Director at the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies and former Foreign Secretary of Pakistan, observed out that longevity of the ceasefire and initiation of a result-oriented peace process would depend on political commitment at the highest level whereby Prime Minister Modi would have to review his wooden-headed approach to the Kashmir dispute and aggressive posture towards Pakistan; formalization of the ceasefire in the form of a verifiable agreement; respite for the Kashmiris in Jammu and Kashmir by ending the lockdown; release of political prisoners; and their involvement in the peace process.

In his Concluding Remarks, Deputy President the Centre for Aerospace & Security Studies and former Vice Chief of Air Staff, **Air Marshal (Retd) Farhat Hussain Khan** highlighted that abrogation of Article 370 and 35A had brought extreme miseries to the people of Jammu and Kashmir in general, and to the region in particular. He stressed that India has to show sincerity if it claims to be a partner in peace; and needed to stop human rights violations and give the Kashmiris their fundamental rights, as a first step. The Deputy President also pointed out that India must stop bringing settlers to make demographic changes in Jammu and Kashmir, revert the status of this disputed territory to pre-5th August 2019, followed by resumption of the process of Composite Dialogue to resolve issues through peaceful means.



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