

# Delhi Dialogue

Report of Proceedings



A Conference Report



Centre for  
Dialogue and  
Reconciliation

**J** JINNAH  
INSTITUTE



Author: Tejal Chandan

Editor: Ejaz Haider

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98100 33682 genesisadv@hotmai.com

A Conference Report

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Report of Proceeding

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## About CDR

Over the past five decades gruelling poverty, misgovernance, political manipulation of religion, gender disparities, and caste and ethnic conflicts have warped and wounded the daily life of South Asia's nearly one and a half billion people. South Asia also remains locked in divisive conflicts.

Launched in December 2000, the Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation is an initiative born in the belief that the South Asian scene was unacceptable but also remediable. CDR hopes to serve as a catalyst for internal and external peace in South Asia through the process of discourse and dialogue – a process that seeks to promote a peaceful approach to the resolution of conflict with justice and equity with the eventual goal of reconciliation.

CDR concerns extend to areas of conflict within the South Asian countries – whether related to caste, religion, gender, language or other factors. CDR believes that any progress in reconciliation within a country is likely to help create an atmosphere conducive to reconciliation within the region. Equally, regional concord would help reduce confrontations within a country.

Several groups already exist in the region, which promote concord in South Asia. CDR hopes to aid these efforts by bringing its perspective of justice, reconciliation and peace. CDR aims to serve as a platform for those committed to dialogue and reconciliation in the region, and also as an instrument to foster dialogue among the region's influential players.

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# Introduction

The India-Pakistan Bilateral Peace Talks resumed in early 2010, with renewed determination to take the Composite Dialogue forward. In the following year, the foreign ministers, foreign secretaries and the prime ministers of both countries met on several occasions to revive the frozen process, most recently in Maldives. On the sidelines of the SAARC Summit, they reaffirmed that "stable, normal and predictable ties" were beneficial not only for India and Pakistan, but for the region as a whole. Although the results of these parleys did not match expectations on both sides, the leaders have vowed to write a "new chapter" in the bilateral relationship and pursue a "creative, constructive and result-oriented dialogue".

While the atmospherics have improved and there is goodwill and hope, the process has been unable so far to shake the problematic "trust but verify" stance -- a reminder that post-26/11 reservations still linger on. Also, despite the Confidence Building Measures (CBMs) which form a vital part of peace-building, procedural and technical challenges continue to impede progress towards achieving the desired results. Both India and Pakistan recognize the importance of involving Kashmiris in the peace process, but there is no consensus on how to approach the problem. This has a negative impact on the Kashmiri people, who are increasingly disillusioned by the peace efforts.

It was with this backdrop that the Centre for Dialogue and Reconciliation, Delhi and the Jinnah Institute, Islamabad brought together a group of eminent scholars, academics, policy makers, journalists and civil society leaders from India, Pakistan and Kashmir for a Track II Dialogue on 18th and 19th December 2011. The Dialogue initiated discussion on the current dynamics of Indo-Pak relations, to chart out specific and timely recommendations on the Kashmir dispute as well as other contentious issues like trade, Afghanistan, the media and terrorism/extremism. In their deliberations, participants focused specifically on the way forward for both countries and on increasing the pace of the peace process.

# Report of Proceedings

## Indo-Pak Bilateral Relations: Need for Realism

"If there was ever a time to resolve the problems between India and Pakistan, it is now", said one participant, stressing that it was time that both countries viewed the bilateral relationship through the prism of realism. For several decades now, both India and Pakistan have had different narratives without a genuine understanding of the other's interests and perspectives. The need for balance in the way both countries approach each other is vital considering the gains that would accrue from a meaningful and comprehensive engagement.

Participants agreed that the current levels of engagement were static, partly because of the debate on the form of future engagement. There are supporters of both a "Grand Gesture" -- such as a treaty of friendship and peace that can reinvigorate the pace of negotiations -- as well as of an "Incremental Approach" that seeks to take smaller steps on the path to resolving the bigger disputes, for instance, addressing the Siachen and Sir Creek issues. This debate continued amongst participants at the Dialogue. The proponents of the "Grand Gesture" argued that it would create an environment that would enable an amicable resolution of Kashmir, while removing the underlying mistrust that drives the workings of security establishments on both sides. The removal of fear and distrust would enable both countries to end their negative obsession with each other. On the other hand, a failure to forge a paradigm shift would merely complicate existing disputes such as Kashmir, while creating new ones like Afghanistan. Those arguing for an "Incremental Approach" stressed the non-viability of grand gestures due to the deep-seated suspicions that cannot be removed in the short term. They feared that a grand gesture could stoke a wave of nationalist reaction that neither leadership could hope to defeat.

Emphasizing the need to come to a balance between the relatively difficult "great leap forward" and a series of relatively minor CBMs, the participants suggested the

institutionalization of the peace process. This was particularly important given the impending withdrawal of NATO from a still unstable Afghanistan, where both India and Pakistan have interests. The current pre-occupation of Pakistan with Afghanistan was seen as an opportunity to put in place a mechanism for cooperation between India and Pakistan wherein both countries can work in tandem to ensure a stable Afghanistan. Indians and Pakistanis at the Dialogue agreed that Afghanistan and trade are two issues that require immediate action. Further, Pakistan has been central to India's foreign policy and its importance increases manifold in the light of India's global ambitions that cannot be pursued in the absence of a stable South Asia. Participants noted that it was crucial for both countries to understand the dynamics of internal politics in the bilateral relationship. Bilateral relations have a domestic dimension that often makes well-intentioned policies from the Centre difficult to explain in the states/provinces. This means that politics without transparent and clearly defined domestic advantages would be impossible for both countries to pursue, despite the willingness of Central Governments to negotiate. Today this phenomenon manifests itself in the repeated reference to action against the 26/11 perpetrators in the context of progress in the peace process. Leaders on both sides have accepted the importance of action against terrorism but have not been able to immunize the dialogue process from setbacks.

It was also felt that strategic and security issues have dominated the relationship between India and Pakistan, making it impossible for other issues to take centre-stage. Trade is a case in point. Further, both countries have different security narratives. While Pakistan focuses on the need to resolve Kashmir, India concentrates on the issue of cross-border terrorism. Having noted this, participants also said that the divergence in the narratives has not impeded the political leadership from goodwill measures such as Mohali. Hence the establishment of a common narrative was seen as a first step in the reconciliation of South Asia's two largest countries. Eventually, a larger community of peacemakers is required to add vigor to the engagement between the two nations by expanding the peace constituency.

### Recommendations

- We strongly recommend the revival of back channel diplomacy between the two countries.
- We welcome the fact that the bilateral dialogue continues to make progress, albeit very slowly.
- We believe that disputes such as Siachen and Sir Creek should be resolved rapidly to enable progress on other matters and instill trust in the peace process. The solution of disputes and removal of mistrust are mutually reinforcing.
- We recommend that Kashmir should continue to be prioritized and should be included in both the Composite Dialogue and the back channel diplomacy.
- We believe the basic problem is mistrust between both parties and progressive steps by leaders on both sides can help remove this obstacle. A significant step towards this would be a visit by Indian Prime Minister to Pakistan.

# Trade as a Foreign Policy Priority

Trade between India and Pakistan has not reached its full potential and remains one of the key areas with prospects for enhanced cooperation. Given that issues like Kashmir and Afghanistan will be mired in politics, participants felt that trade and commerce could constitute a major foreign policy initiative. Indo-Pak relations have been preoccupied with strategic issues, so decisions regarding cross-border trade, investments and transit have been sidelined. Participants urged that it was time to change this and let economics take the lead in the peace process. It was also noted that there is no economic argument against Indo-Pak trade and that complacency on the economic issues will only burden the already stressed economies in the region. However, it was also noted that Pakistan needs to do a computational exercise to figure out what sectors will be opened up more easily than others.

Pakistan's economy is in a perilous state, which can be equally dangerous for India. Hence it is imperative that economic cooperation becomes the highest priority. One participant suggested that cooperation has to be speeded up and cannot be implemented gradually. He stressed that the decision of the Pakistani government to grant the MFN status to India should be formalized during the meeting between the Commerce Ministers of the two countries, scheduled for February 2012. He further opined that time is of the essence and neither country can afford to lose any more time, at least on the issue of trade and commerce which can give a boost to developing trust. Acknowledging that the Army plays an important role in Pakistan, participants emphasized the importance of ensuring its support to foster better economic ties. According to another participant, better economic relations will be in the interest of the Pakistani Army. He pointed out that despite all odds, India and Pakistan have been trading partners since 1947 (except between 1965 and 1974) and that India is Pakistan's seventh largest trading partner.

India will remain a larger player in the region and Pakistan stands to gain more from this economic relationship. Participants outlined some actionable points for both the countries. India should delink all other issues from trade and look at trade with Pakistan as a way to transform the political economy in that country. Putting the onus of better economic relations in South Asia on India, participants said that India should unilaterally

open-up trade with Pakistan. India, it was noted, cannot dream of becoming a true global economic player without taking the South Asian region along with it. Hence, in terms of self-interest, it will have to concentrate on what it needs to do to improve economic ties with Pakistan.

On the other hand, Pakistan needs to focus on how to project economic ties with India internally. It has to prove to its own people that the country stands to benefit from such a relationship. Pakistan has an advantageous geo-strategic location, where it can become a bridge between South Asia, Central Asia and West Asia. Leveraging this position with trade and transit routes will bring enormous changes to the Pakistani economy. Pakistan should be able to project the dangers to its economy in the absence of an MFN agreement with India and begin to build the confidence of Indian investors by challenging the argument that India is Pakistan's greatest threat. Pakistan can encourage direct imports from India, create preferential conditions for Indian investors and sell transit rights to India.

Economic pressures are of two kinds: one comes from above, i.e. globalization, and the other comes from below, i.e. from the aspirations of people. While governments have little or no control over the pressures from above, they can act on the pressures from below. The logic of the current situation is that both India and Pakistan will have to eventually concede to the pressures from below in charting their economic relationship. In developing better economic ties, both countries will have to look beyond their capitals and build trade links between other regions such as Gujarat and Sindh; the two Punjabs; and Mumbai and Karachi. Participants agreed that trade will not automatically lead to peace and that opening up trade will benefit some sectors, while others might lose. Although different parts of each country will be affected differently, there has to be a mechanism in place to connect those who will benefit most. Acknowledging that trade has been the only CBM that has worked in Kashmir, participants noted that structures need to be in place to sustain better economic ties. Along with the MFN status, both countries will have to simultaneously think of the next step which could be the issue of transit.

### Recommendations:

- We welcome the decision of Pakistan to grant MFN status to India. It is not only a major step forward to increase trade between the two countries but also a clear indication of intent to improve trade relations.
- All estimates suggest that trade ought to increase substantially in the next few years and both India and Pakistan stand to gain from legalizing trade currently passing through third countries. Therefore we suggest that Pakistan sell transit permissions to India as a next step to MFN.
- We welcome India's decision to eliminate non tariff barriers in order to increase Pakistani exports.
- With the balance of trade greatly in India's favor, we propose that India take unilateral steps to facilitate and boost exports from Pakistan.
- We welcome the talks between the Commerce Secretaries of India and Pakistan to open investment opportunities for businessmen from both sides and provide support to investors

# Afghanistan: The Need to Define Interests

The issue of building cooperation and communication between India and Pakistan formed the crux of the discussions in this session. All participants agreed that both countries have inherent interests in the stability of Afghanistan and therefore should not be wary of communicating and defining their interests clearly. Given the impending withdrawal of NATO and the dangers of the intensification of civil strife in Afghanistan, both India and Pakistan should seek cooperation in ensuring peace and security in the region. A broad consensus emerged among the participants over the degree to which Pakistan was affected by events in Afghanistan, as well as over the fact that India's presence in Afghanistan as a friendly state was inevitable.

Substantiating the argument that Afghanistan's internal disturbances critically affected Pakistan's interests, participants gave examples of Afghan refugees and opium trade. Pakistan is home to over three million registered Afghan refugees and, by some estimates, over two million unregistered refugees. Further turmoil in that country would cause a humanitarian crisis, the brunt of which would be borne by Pakistan. In addition to this, relations between Pakistan and Afghanistan have often been turbulent given Afghanistan's irredentism apropos of territories that are legitimately part of Pakistan. The intensification of factionalism in Afghan politics and vested interests in continued strife are also seen as causes for concern. In addition, participants argued that an intensification of civil war in Afghanistan is likely to influence the Pakistani Taliban.

Arguments were also made in support of India's continued presence in Afghanistan. Some participants pointed out the humanitarian nature of the Indian mission, while others remained sceptical of that proposition. Attention was drawn to the growing trade with Afghanistan and India's involvement in institution building there.

Indo-Pak cooperation in Afghanistan has been a victim of negative perceptions. On one hand, Pakistan fears being encircled by India and Afghanistan and has shown reservations about India bypassing Pakistan in its dealings with Iran and Afghanistan. Conversely, India has been arguing that an Indian intervention in Afghanistan, as perceived by Pakistan, is geographically improbable. Indian participants noted that India's role in training the Afghanistan National Army was aimed at restoring stability and security.

Participants agreed that Indo-Pak relations over Afghanistan cannot be looked at in isolation and both countries should be mindful of the role of other players in that country, especially the United States and Iran. Pakistan's relations with these two countries are expected to shape its Afghan polity for years to come. There may not be a total withdrawal of US forces in 2014, with the continued presence of NATO bases. This was seen to be problematic as it would give the Pakistani Taliban justification to wage war on Pakistan. On the other hand, if an eventual American withdrawal materialized, the Afghan security forces are likely to be confronted with major security challenges and a scarcity of resources.

Participants presented the different sides of future US-Pakistan relations in the light of the recent downturn in this relationship. While some saw it as an opportunity to rethink trilateral ties between Pakistan, India and Iran, others treated the downturn as disastrous at a time when Pakistan is going through an unprecedented economic and security crisis. Some participants saw the possibility of closer work with neighboring states such as India, Iran and Afghanistan as a necessity for Pakistan, given the loss of American aid. They were also concerned that America might urge India to play a more aggressive role in Afghanistan, thereby sending the India-Pakistan relationship on a downward spiral.

All participants agreed that neither India nor Pakistan can achieve its goals in Afghanistan without the other's cooperation. Indian imperatives of trade, anti-terrorism and the maintenance of historical ties with Afghanistan would only be possible with the co-operation of Pakistan. If Pakistan were willing to co-operate with India over Afghanistan, possibilities for aid projects would grow and it would itself prosper from the resultant transit trade. The success of a peaceful and potentially prosperous relationship among the three states relies on the willingness of both India and Pakistan to respect each other's interests in Afghanistan, as well as the right of the Afghan people to choose their own government. As far as the Indo-Pak relationship is concerned, tensions can spill over to Afghanistan if both countries do not take steps towards engaging in a meaningful bilateral dialogue. India and Pakistan share the goal of reconciliation in Afghanistan; perhaps this could be the starting point. Policymakers and civil society need to analyze and highlight the benefits of Indo- Pak cooperation in Afghanistan.

### Recommendations:

- We recognize that, as the country more directly affected by Afghan instability, Pakistan has a vital interest in maintaining peace and stability in Afghanistan.
- India, a regional power has important interests in Afghanistan and shares with Pakistan an interest in the use of the Afghan overland network for South Asia's trade with Central Asia and beyond.
- We appreciate the support both countries have offered to the proposal for an Afghan owned and Afghan led reconciliation process which, rather than the use of force, can bring peace to Afghanistan.
- We also recognize the right of Afghani people to determine the terms of reconciliation and urge both Pakistan and India to use their influence to persuade various Afghan positions to move towards such reconciliation and all other interested countries to pledge non-influence in Afghanistan's internal affairs.

# Kashmir and the Indispensability of Continued Dialogue

The resolution of the Kashmir dispute is vital to the vision of stable Indo-Pak relations in the future. Bringing in the perspectives of Indians, Pakistanis and Kashmiris, this session was driven by the need towards working for the well-being of Kashmiris on both sides of the Line of Control. The need for progress in the peace process is even more critical today because the demography of Kashmir comprises a large number of Kashmiris under the age of 35, who are increasingly losing patience and confidence in the peace efforts. Equally important is the need to instill confidence in the incremental approach to peace that is currently being implemented. Participants noted that the current CBMs in Kashmir are not yielding the desired results and cautioned that the moderates in Kashmir were losing ground to an increasingly unpredictable and volatile youth. They further stressed that there is an underlying apprehension in the Valley that governments on both sides are being complacent about the issue and constantly trying to push it out of their priority lists. This, according to one participant, has led to the perception that there is a lack of ownership and responsibility on the part of the governments.

Participants agreed that the resolution of the Kashmiri dispute was long overdue and that part of the solution would be for the governments of both India and Pakistan to confront extremists in their respective countries. A number of concrete CBMs were proposed for Kashmir, such as greater dialogue between the governments in Srinagar and Muzaffarabad, greater trade and travel between the two sides and the resolution of pending water disputes. The repeal of laws such as the Armed Forces Special Powers Act (AFSPA) and withdrawal of armed forces from civilian areas was seen as an absolute necessity. The release of political prisoners and earnest investigations into killings and disappearances was also emphasized. Participants noted that the implementation and institutionalization of existing CBMs should be prioritized. These could go a long way in improving the living conditions of Kashmiris, integrating the two Kashmiris and providing a more secure livelihood for the people in the region.

Recognising that Kashmiris today have the capacity and understanding to sustain peace, participants noted that the educated youth and the political leadership are aware of the options available to them. The Kashmiri people have the will to resolve their problems and governments must provide the opportunities to exercise this. It was accepted across the board that any agreement between India and Pakistan has to involve the Kashmiri leadership and take into consideration the will of the Kashmiri people.

The presence of nihilism among the youth of Kashmir was discussed with much concern. Kashmiri youth now constitute 66% of the population. Highly politicized, this population cohort now believes that non-violent dissent has failed to yield tangible results. The perceived lack of interest of India and Pakistan in Kashmir, at times when the Valley was not in turmoil, has been convincing the Kashmiri youth that violence might be the only viable option left. The inability of the 'moderate' leadership in both India and Pakistan to confront small extremist minorities in their midst is seen more and more as a sign of political ineffectiveness. This view is especially pronounced in the context of the increasing intolerance towards dissent in both countries. The failure of the peace process to deliver tangible results, it is feared, will lead to the adoption of Taliban-like tactics in Kashmir in the wake of American withdrawal from Afghanistan. Participants suggested that as a first step towards arresting this trend, eminent civil society leaders from both sides need to meet the Prime Ministers of India and Pakistan to seek their public and irrevocable commitment to peace in Kashmir. Further dialogue between all parties must not only be resumed, but should be robustly continued. The failure to do so can only lead to the total alienation of the volatile youth of Kashmir.

The need to take potentially unpopular decisions even at times when the government was far from strong was emphasized by all participants. While acknowledging the importance of consensus among various political and civil society groups, participants emphasized that it was unlikely for all groups in both countries to simultaneously support the peace process at any given point in time. Hence, it was suggested that the leadership move ahead without getting entangled in the exercise of seeking consensus from all quarters. Participants noted that while such decisions are challenging, they are also necessary.

Kashmir requires institutions that are meaningful for the people and institutionalize a system of peace and reconciliation. To convey their genuine interest in peace, both India and Pakistan will have to outline the key aspects of a solution and also ensure that Kashmiris enjoy all freedoms such as travel, education, trade and communication in both India and Pakistan. Participants agreed that both New Delhi and Islamabad have to take bold, innovative and inclusive decisions for meaningful progress in the peace process.

### Recommendations:

- We support the involvement of Kashmiri leadership in the decision-making dialogue process.
- We demand a genuine space for a non-violent democratic movement, which will ensure that things will not take a violent turn.
- We demand the release of political prisoners and release of youth arrested for their involvement in non-violent activities.
- Recognizing that CBMs are not an end in themselves, we urge that the leadership on both sides ensure that the relevance of Kashmiri CBMs be enhanced, particularly facilitation of cross-LoC economic trade.
- We welcome the decision of Foreign Ministers of India and Pakistan to facilitate meetings between economic stakeholders from both sides.
- There is a strong apprehension amongst Kashmiris that both India and Pakistan have put the solution of Kashmir on the hold. We recommend that a group of eminent persons from India and Pakistan meet the Prime Ministers of both India and Pakistan to seek their public commitment for peace in Kashmir.
- We recommend the removal of barriers to cross-LoC travel and communication, and a relaxation of visa regulations.

# Media: Bridging Relations through Communication

This session sought to discuss the role of media in the Indo-Pak relationship and the strengthening of collaboration between media houses on both sides. Analyzing whether the media can be held responsible for tensions between India and Pakistan, it was pointed out that while it has the power to put a negative spin on the process it cannot be held responsible for its failure. The negative image of the media, it was noted, was the result of generalizations made on the basis of a few media houses; the discourse and analysis provided by some media houses become the standard by which all others are judged.

On the issue of media trying to manipulate facts, participants emphasized that with the growth of alternative media and social media it has become increasingly difficult for mainstream media such as television and print to manipulate stories, as information is available from varied sources. Disseminating information is no longer limited to accredited journalists. All those who can put a story, thought or idea out using different digital platforms are now part of the media. Media houses and journalists were urged to make their reportage more inclusive by representing all shades of political opinion to enable viewers to assess and analyze the situation themselves.

Emphasizing the need for greater freedom for all forms of media, participants pointed out the constraints within which media functions. The cold-blooded murder of media personnel and intimidation of their supporters has hampered the freedom, safety and security of media personnel. Further, media houses are challenged by several restrictions, as governments have sought to control the dissemination of information. Smaller newspapers, for instance, are completely dependent on government funding through advertisements and would have to wind up if they lose this source of funding. As a result, most of these newspapers are constrained to report the statist perspective on almost all occasions. Participants also expressed the concern that both in India and Pakistan, though more in India, the media does not challenge the establishment for fear of restrictions and, more importantly, losing their source of information. It was further noted that in India, the English media enjoys a disproportionate amount of influence in policy circles, unlike Pakistan where the vernacular press holds greater sway. The focus

on English media gives the Indian government lopsided feedback on its policies and masks the actual sentiments of the people.

The role of the news media in Kashmir was given special attention and participants noted that media reporting in the Valley is met with cynicism. Pointing specifically to the appointment of interlocutors and their report, it was said that Kashmir's new generation is dismissive of the statist manner in which the dialogue is reported. According to the youth, media reportage justifies Indian policy in Kashmir; by placing restrictions on the media, the government has been eroding the space for dissent in a democratic society. Some participants also argued that the resolution of Kashmir was being put on a hold by both India and Pakistan and the media was following suit by leaving out stories on Kashmir and its political solution. This, according to one participant, sends a wrong message to the agitating youth who are already inclined to believe that violence is the only way to get the attention of the state.

Different opinions emerged on the role that media should play in the Indo- Pak dialogue process. While some participants noted that the media should take a proactive role in promoting peace between the two countries, others said it was merely the medium for news and could not manufacture opinion. The latter view was based on the fact that decision making lies with the government, which may or may not choose to use the opinion propagated through the media. Having noted this, participants stressed that the relationship between media houses on both sides has not reached the level of the composite dialogue between the two countries. Cooperation between media form both sides can be improved by easing restrictions on travel and work-related matters, through measures such as removal of visa restrictions; granting overland and travel permissions at short notice; and granting equal access to all regions in both countries. Pakistani journalists should therefore be free to work with the Indian media and vice versa. This access could lead to a better understanding of popular sentiments on both sides and enhance cooperation, with a free flow of communication bridging politically created gaps. Constant coverage of conflict colors the minds of people on both sides, but broader media cooperation can remove these negative perceptions.

### Recommendations:

- We recommend that all accredited journalists in India and Pakistan be allowed to freely travel across the border both overland and by air.
- Media houses must institutionalize arrangements under which journalists from both sides can work together.
- Track II Dialogues should be enlarged to include all shades of opinion from the media and focus on the growing importance of social media as a means to reach out to a wider audience.
- We demand that journalists from both sides be allowed to visit all areas of conflict in both India and Pakistan.

# Terrorism and Extremism: Strengthening Existing Frameworks

The 26/11 attacks had a tremendous impact on India-Pakistan relations and continue to influence public opinion in India. The Indian government has understandably laid emphasis on action against the perpetrators of this attack, linking this with the progress of the peace process. While the Track II community continues to insist that the peace process should be delinked from action against terrorism, it also agrees that both countries need to work closely to strengthen existing counter-terrorism institutions and create mechanisms for cooperation on the issue. Both governments have also agreed that concerted action needs to be taken against extremism and extremist propaganda.

With this in mind, the participants at the Delhi Dialogue discussed the role of civil society in tackling extremism and religious intolerance in the region, as well as the steps that both India and Pakistan can take to combat terrorism. They examined the impact of strained Pak-US relations on the fight against terrorism. Dwelling on the definition of terrorism, they argued that the UN definition does not apply to all situations in South Asia. Pakistan for example is fighting terrorists on the one hand and extremists i.e. the Taliban on the other. The lines between terrorism and extremism are blurred in the region, although the causes of each phenomenon may be different. One participant also sought to draw a distinction between insurgency and terrorism and stressed that insurgencies often seek political ends but terrorism seeks to destroy political structures by instilling fear in the general population.

Coming to the role of civil society, participants had different opinions about its efficacy in tackling extremist thought. Some participants noted that the purpose of terrorism and extremism is to destroy civil society, thus civil society is the victim and has no role to play. Civil society is an enabler in the active and passive sense but its action is limited by the rise of violence in the society. Violence changes social attitudes over time, leaving behind a passive population alongside an uncivil society. Others noted that civil society has a crucial role in the fields of information sharing and education policies. Syllabi can preach hatred and intolerance and lay the foundation for exclusive societies that can lapse into violence. Civil society leaders and groups can advocate for pluralist and tolerant syllabi and also work with the government in framing such syllabi. In addition, civil society can play an active role in information dissemination through new media and

social media. Social media has become a platform for preaching hatred and intolerance; it was suggested that civil society leaders work efficiently to arrest this trend by creating alternative narratives.

Discussing the consequences of the strained US-Pakistan relations, one participant noted that while this could lead to a roll-back in aid to Pakistan, on the brighter side it can also help ease extremism in the country. Pakistan's close ties with the US are seen as one of the main reasons for the spread of extremism and terrorism in that country and a visible distance from the US could ease the Taliban challenge faced by the Pakistani government. Further, participants highlighted the necessity of strengthening existing bilateral and multilateral arrangements dealing with the issue of terrorism, by ensuring that domestic laws in India and Pakistan reflect the provisions of these arrangements. The institutionalization of mechanisms for cooperation between public agencies and security agencies in both countries was strongly recommended. These would be immensely useful in enhanced communication and sharing of crucial information.

### Recommendations:

- We reiterate that states must not use terrorism as an instrument of policy.
- We strongly recommend the strengthening of existing bilateral and multilateral arrangements dealing with the issue of terrorism. This may also include cooperative policing.
- Bilateral and multilateral arrangements on terrorism should be reflected in the domestic laws in both countries. This should include mutual legal assistance to help deal with, investigate and prosecute transnational crimes.
- We suggest the institutionalization of mechanisms for greater cooperation between public agencies including relevant security agencies. This can be done by holding scheduled meetings of the agencies at various levels.
- We recognize that civil society's role in dealing with terrorism is limited, but urge states to support and protect all efforts by elements of civil society to challenge extremist narratives.
- In dealing with the problem of extremism, states must be mindful of any discourse that seeks to isolate and persecute any community on the basis of religion, ethnicity or language and take firm steps to discourage such narratives.
- We strongly recommend the monitoring of education syllabi to ensure that policies of all educational institutions abide by the established principles of democracy, pluralism and tolerance

# Participants

1. Attiya Inayatullah, Senator for the PML-Q
2. Aziz Ahmed Khan, former Pakistan High Commissioner to India
3. Akbar Zaidi, economist and Visiting Professor, Columbia University
4. Aasiya Riaz, Joint Director, Pakistan Institute of Legislative Development and Transparency (PILDAT)
5. C. Raja Mohan, Senior Fellow, Centre for Policy Research, New Delhi
6. Ejaz Haider, Executive Director, Jinnah Institute
7. Humayun Khan, former Foreign Secretary
8. Jyoti Malhotra, freelance journalist & advisor to Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
9. Malik Ahmad Khan, Member, National Assembly, for the PPP
10. Najmuddin Shaikh, former Foreign Secretary, Pakistan
11. Nasim Zehra, Director Current Affairs, Dunya TV
12. Parvaiz Bukhari, Independent Journalist reporting from Jammu & Kashmir
13. Prem Shankar Jha, Newspaper Editor, Author & Columnist
14. Rajiv Kumar, Secretary General, Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry (FICCI)
15. Rajmohan Gandhi, Author, Historian & Former Member of Parliament & Chairman, CDR
16. Ravi Sawhney, Lt. Gen (ret'd) & Distinguished Fellow, Vivekananda International Foundation
17. Salman Haidar, former Foreign Secretary, India
18. Shyam Saran, Former Foreign Secretary & Chairman, Research and Information System for Developing Countries
19. Salman Zaidi, Security Analyst, Jinnah Institute
20. Shahid Siddiqui, Editor, Naya Duniya
21. Shemrez Nauman Afzal, Program Coordinator, Jinnah Institute
22. Suhasini Haidar, Deputy Foreign Editor & prime-time anchor, CNN-IBN
23. Sushobha Barve, Executive Director, CDR
24. Syed Rifaat Hussain, Chair Department of Defence and Strategic Studies, QAU
25. Usha Gandhi, Researcher
26. Usmaan Ahmad, Kashmir Director for Mercy Corps
27. Wajahat Habibullah, Chairperson, National Commission for Minorities, India
28. Yasin Malik, Chairman, Jammu Kashmir Liberation Front

# The CDR Approach

Co-operation, synergy and commitment are the watchwords underlying the CDR approach. CDR seeks and welcomes the association and participation of concerned Indian citizens and residents of South Asia, indeed, any group or organisation interested in promoting amity in South Asia.

Through independent research, interviews, and field visits, CDR proposes to address some of the conflict situations or issues that divide South Asian societies – along communal, caste or civic lines. Above all, CDR's attempt is to encourage voices from different sides of a conflict, internal or external, to sit together, talk – and listen. CDR employs and promotes sensitive listening as a technique of intervention.

CDR's objectives are:

- To lead and foster initiatives that genuinely create an understanding of honest social, political and economic dialogues;
- To assist and facilitate, wherever possible, dialogues between violently torn or divided groups with a view to restoring trust;
- To promote a genuine respect for the right to dissent from dominant points of view and a respect for opposing points of view;
- To develop the skills of dialogue: patient and compassionate listening, accepting truth, equity and justice, and fostering the concept of reparation, not retaliation;
- To organise events and meetings and publish and disseminate material to promote these objectives.

# PROJECT Kashmir, 2010-2013

## A Dialogue Initiative for Peace and Conflict Resolution

The highly complex and difficult issue of Kashmir has been the focus of CDR activities during the past years. In over a dozen different initiatives, CDR has organized interactions between people from Jammu & Kashmir and some of India's decision-makers and opinion-makers, between members of Kashmir's majority and minority communities, and between influential figures in Kashmir and their counterparts in New Delhi. CDR team also made visits to Pakistan for frank and private conversations on the Kashmir question. The aim is to contribute towards creating a climate for a meaningful political dialogue, and to preserve and develop channels of goodwill and trust.

At the human level, direct meetings have provided various sides with an opportunity to understand the other's point of view, to share in each other's suffering, and to begin the process of healing and trust. Based upon CDR's earlier experiences in Kashmir, this Project Initiative has built upon the dialogue process initiated and conducted in various sectors within civil society groups, youth, women, political leaders and others and expand upon them, both qualitatively and quantitatively. CDR's experience of a decade's activities in this region is the base for its three-year Project Kashmir 2010-2013.

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Centre for  
Dialogue and  
Reconciliation

Email: [cdr@cdr-india.org](mailto:cdr@cdr-india.org)  
Website: <http://cdr-india.org>

Concept, Design & Print by: GENESIS 98100 33682  
[genesiadvt@hotmail.com](mailto:genesiadvt@hotmail.com)