India-Pakistan Relation: Problem of Ceasefire Violation

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1 Introduction

India desires peaceful, cooperative and friendly relations with Pakistan. This requires an environment free from violence and terrorism, which is difficult to attain.

Any dialogue between India and Pakistan is quite often followed by a ceasefire violation along the LOC lines. As a result, bilateral engagement is taking two steps back after taking one step forward. This whole process is not something new, owing to a shared disputed and disturbed border since 1947 between them.

To curb cycle of violence along the 725km long Line of Control (LOC), which divides J&K into two parts, a landmark ceasefire agreement between India and Pakistan was signed in 2003. It included framework of

- military confidence building measures (CDMs) that kept the artillery pieces at least 20 km away from the LoC
- non-military CBMs such as a cross-LoC bus service and trade

However, the peace didn't last very long and was hampered by a string of actions by both sides. This situation leads to loss of lives of not only army jawans but also innocent people.

In a written reply to the Rajya Sabha, defence minister Manohar Parrikar said there were 199 ceasefire violations by Pakistan along the border with India till June this year. In 2014, the number of violations was 583, and in 2013, it was 347.

2 Reasons behind ceasefire violations

The drastic increase in the ceasefire violations can be termed as a show of power. Both countries vehemently shifts blame on each other for it.

Pakistan believes

- India is taking up border works which in “violation of ceasefire agreement” of 2003.
- On other occasions, it simply retaliates to open firing from Indian Territory.

A thorough analysis from Indian side proves that

- Pakistan’s deep state is in not in sync with political leadership.
- It wants to display its ability to start a proxy war.
- Apart from aiding infiltration, currently violations are used as an instrument of diplomacy to send veiled messages.
- Pakistan’s internal peace highly depends on proving up India as its external enemy.
- Pakistan army’s identity and its ideology will get defeated if ever peace is achieved between the two nations.
- Pakistan’s ISI and army may never let the political leadership override their decision.
- They want to keep the pot boiling by disrupting any peace process between the two nations. The recent
Gurdaspur terror attack, which came ahead of the NSA-level talks, is an example of it.

- Practice is not new, it is only being used more often now for psychological gains.

### 3 Impact on villagers living near the border

The borderlands in J&K represent a case of ‘alienated borderlands’. Caught in the hostility between India and Pakistan, the people in border areas of J&K are struck up in the situation of uncertainty.

- It refers to those kind of borders which reflect ‘extremely unfavourable conditions’ defined by warfare, political disputes, intense nationalism, ideological animosity, etc.
- Such conditions while leading to control over people living in the border areas, impact on their quality of life.
- While multiple wars (1947–48, 1965, 1971, 1999) created havoc in the border areas, even peacetime did not provide any relief to the people there.
- The situation during last two and a half decades has been more unstable.
- With the onset of militancy, the border became more active.

In 2003, a formal ceasefire was declared, which brought the border people some relief. But this ceasefire has often been violated and the uncertainty of the borders has not ended.

Continuous volatility of borders has resulted into:

1. **Militarization of the borderlands**
   - overwhelming presence of security forces - many towns in the border areas almost seem like military towns

2. **Life and livelihood loss**
   - Huge land area are under the control of the army. It is generally out of bounds for the local residents.
   - There are various kinds of restrictions including restriction of movement.
   - People have become prey to the communalized violence on both the sides of the border.
   - What can be described as normal life – the children attending school, the farmers cultivating the land, or even people living in their own homes – can be disrupted at any moment.

The situation is worsen due to inadequate or lack of compensation, the conditions in the relief camps, the conditions of schools, college and other education facilities.

Partition is not a settled history, but a living problem for tens of thousands of people living along the LoC. Although for a short duration, any ceasefire agreement between two nations comes as a huge relief to them.

### 4 Impact on bilateral ties

- Ever since the two countries started the peace process, scepticism about the longevity of bilateral dialogue has been a perennial feature of discourse on India-Pakistan relations.
- Crafting a durable Pakistan policy has been a challenge for every Indian Prime Minister since Independence. Each one of them, from Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru onwards, has tried to put their own individual imprint. Yet, it remains a complex relationship. Even Narendra Modi government, after its initial enthusiasm, couldn't ensure a lasting breakthrough with Pakistan.
- It is widely acknowledged on Indian side that elements in Pakistan’s decision-making circles tries to sustain a hostile relationship with India. As long as these elements remain influential, a normal state to state relationship will be very difficult to achieve. Pakistan’s internal politics will need to change before these elements can be neutralized.
- In India, there is consensus on the need to have normal and peaceful relations with Pakistan. There is also a strong sentiment that Pakistan’s support to terrorism against India prevents normalization. Hence, the peace efforts will take a long time to yield conclusive results.
- Meanwhile India should continue to expand the range of options in its political tool kit thereby increasing India’s leverage.
5 How should the government respond?

- In a recent interview, India’s foreign secretary has made it clear that any unprovoked firing from the Pakistani side would meet with an effective and forceful response from our forces.
- While the Pakistani defence minister has lightly warned India that it does not want convert border tension between two nuclear neighbours into confrontation. The response by the Indian army will meet the immediate psychological need of the hour.
- But this rising tension needs to be cooled down. The response has to be on different fronts - military, political and diplomatic and these cannot be stand alone.
- The fact remains that both countries have too much at stake in the peace process. For India, it provides an opportunity to rise above the security concern and establish credible relations with Pakistan. For Pakistan, it is a way out of the multiple crises, especially its internal security situation that has worsened over time threatening the stability of the state and the societal structure.

6 Conclusion

There is no alternative to a dialogue to resolve the issues. It is too utopian to think that peace can prevail only after all opposition to the moves aimed at bringing about the peace between both the countries vanishes completely. There are various ways in which the ceasefire agreement can be implemented as long as there is a will to do so from both sides.