



Report of the Wolfsberg Think Tank "Making the 'Impossible' Happen: A Realist Path to Peace in Kashmir" led by Dr. Verghese Koithara, Vice Admiral (Retd.), Indian Navy, Kerala, India, at Wolfsberg on 7 October 2004

1. The problem-solving attention of the United States is focused on Iraq and its periphery. The serious medium term dangers posed in and through Pakistan (Islamic extremism and nuclear proliferation), are likely to stay unaddressed as a result. A contributory factor is the belief that the India-Pakistan conflict is unresolvable. Dr. Koithara argued (an argument spelt out at greater length in his new book **Crafting Peace in Kashmir: Through a Realist Lens**) that this perception, while true in the past, is no longer valid.
2. The peace path suggested by Dr. Koithara is that of converting the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir into a mutually accepted border, through incorporating it into a package that includes measures such as balanced autonomy on both sides of the new border, easier movement between the divided parts of the state, and co-operation in other areas (e.g. the environment, transportation and tourism).
3. The Pakistan Army's dominant position in the country cannot be wished away. The conflict with India has benefitted Pakistan a great deal in the past, but the Pakistan Army realises that these benefits cannot be sustained in the future. The Army's need to make peace is therefore a new and encouraging factor. Equally unimportant is the desire of the Indian elite to be rid of this distracting conflict, provided it does not involve any territorial concession. The third hopeful factor is the considerable and concurrent influence that the US has today on policy making circles in both countries.
4. The peace process currently underway offers possibly the best opportunity for conflict resolution since 1953. This could be frittered away if its progress is left entirely in the hands of the two governments which are burdened with a long history of failure in such negotiations, alongside deep institutional distrust and fear of creative solutions. The two parties urgently need help in the form of well-conducted studies that illuminate the many hazy areas that have to be traversed along a path to peace. Examples of such studies are:
 - The economic and political benefits of resolving the conflict
 - The true, current 'interests' of India, Pakistan and the discontented in Kashmir - and how these interests are related to the 'positions' they present to the world
 - A realistic package of ideas for conflict resolution
 - Ways of providing adequate autonomy on both sides of the J&K divide
 - Possibilities for moulding policy-relevant opinion in favour of peace
 - Clarifying the role of outsiders.

These studies can provide very valuable intellectual-resource support for the ongoing peace process, and help it to revive if it falters. Think tanks from any country can contribute to the process. Peace will bring benefits, both to South Asia and to other parts of the world, through the reduction of terrorist and nuclear risks.

Prabhu Guptara