

communal riots in the two Bengals had brought Pakistan and India to the edge of a precipice. Under these circumstances, it would have been over-optimistic to expect that the Award might be fully and effectively implemented. Even the fact that such an award had been made and accepted was a rare example for the peaceful settlement of other Indo-Pakistan disputes.

It has been mentioned that the Indo-Pakistan Agreement of April 1948 (in Paragraph 3 of Section 1) had stated that "Any propaganda for the amalgamation of Pakistan and India or of portions thereof, including East Bengal, on the one hand, and West Bengal and Assam or Cooch-Bihar or Tripura, on the other, shall be discouraged".¹ But the Indian Deputy Prime Minister, Sardar Patel, in a speech at Calcutta on January 14, 1950, remarked "Artificial boundaries cannot separate them (the Hindus of East Bengal) from us. How can we go to their help? If we can express sympathy with the people of South Africa and run to their assistance, it is easier to do so in the case of the people in East Pakistan. Do not forget that important limbs of your mother India have been cut".² It was no surprise when, at the beginning of 1950, the Hindu Mahasabha and the Rashtriya Swayam Sevak Sangh (RSS) openly came out with a demand for the forcible seizure of East Pakistan and the repudiation of Partition.³ The echo of Patel's speech also found expression in the establishment of a 'Provisional Government of East Bengal' in Calcutta. The Hindu extremists even raised an irregular army to take 'police action' against East Pakistan. On February 5, 1950, in a public meeting at Rawalpindi, Liaquat Ali Khan stated that India was making preparations for war.⁴

In the face of such a political atmosphere and consequent severe riots in the two Bengals, Nehru's threat of 'other methods' resulted in a further deterioration of Indo-Pakistan relations. On February 23, 1950, the Indian Prime Minister warned Pakistan in his Parliament: "If the methods we have suggested are not agreed to, it may be that we shall have to adopt *other methods*." He added "To me it appears that what has happened in Kashmir and what is happening in East Bengal are all interlinked and we

¹*The News Chronicle* (London), November 8, 1948.

²*The Annual Register*, 1951, p. 119. (Bracketed words added.)

³*The Hindu* (Madras), January 14, 1950.

⁴*Weekly Pakistan News* (London), February 18, 1950.

⁵*India News* (London), March 4, 1950. (Italics added.)

cannot separate them".⁵ This unfortunate statement, particularly interlinking a part of sovereign Pakistan with the disputed territory of Kashmir, was taken by Pakistanis as an open threat to the territorial integrity of their State. This was certainly not a step towards peace in the subcontinent, as it generated a war-like atmosphere. Pakistan's Prime Minister, Liaquat Ali Khan, invited "all the peace-loving people of the world to note this threat..." He said, "The truth of the matter is that the leaders of India have not accepted Pakistan and keep on devising methods of undoing it. But Pakistan is an unalterable fact. The sooner this is realized by the leaders of India, the better it will be for the stability and progress of this subcontinent."¹

By the spring of 1950, Pakistan was faced with great threats to its security: Indian Armed Forces were within striking distance on both its eastern and western borders. Major-General J.N. Choudhury, who had the experience of the Hyderabad 'Police action' behind him, was reported to have made a reconnaissance tour of the West Bengal border areas.² The grim border situation of that time has been aptly described by Ian Stephens, a former editor of the distinguished newspaper, *The Statesman* (published simultaneously from Delhi and Calcutta): "By the first week of March, whatever Delhi's intentions, war had nearly come: the two countries were within a hair's breadth of it. Troops had been moved, not only in Bengal but—more perturbing—in the Punjab. India's armoured division, to which no real Pakistani counterpart existed, was pushed forward in a way which threatened Lahore."³ The Indian press and several Indian leaders were demanding a declaration of war on Pakistan.⁴ This dangerous situation remained unchanged till the signing of the Liaquat-Nehru Agreement on the Minorities' Security, on April 8, 1950. This Indo-Pakistan reconciliation came as an anticlimax to the war hysteria in the subcontinent. Nehru told the Indian Parliament: "We have stopped ourselves at the edge of the precipice and turned our back to it."⁵

But, to a student of Indo-Pakistan relations, the agreement was merely a temporary lull in the long and tragic conflict bet-

¹*The Times* (London), February 28, 1950.

²*Dawn*, March 18, 1950.

³Ian Stephens, *Horned Moon* (London, Chatto & Windus, 1953), p. 33.

⁴*The New York Herald Tribune*, April 11, 1950.

⁵*Ibid.*

THE FRONTIERS OF PAKISTAN

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by

MUJTABA RAZVI

M. A. (Sind); M. A., LL. B. (Karachi); Ph. D. (London)
Associate Professor of International Relations
University of Karachi



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