

Indo-Pak Joint Working Groups Agreement

23 June 1997

Joint Statement

1. The Foreign Secretaries of Pakistan and India, Mr. Shamshad Ahmad and Shri. Salman Haider met in Islamabad on 19–23 June, 1997.
2. During his stay in Islamabad, the Indian Foreign Secretary was received by the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of Pakistan. The Indian Foreign Secretary also called on the Foreign Minister Mr. Gohar Ayub Khan.
3. As decided at their meeting in New Delhi in March 1997 and as directed by their respective Prime Ministers, the Foreign Secretaries of India and Pakistan continued their wide-ranging and comprehensive dialogue on all outstanding issues between the two countries with each side elaborating its respective position.
The discussions were held in a cordial and constructive atmosphere. It was also agreed that both sides would take all possible steps to prevent hostile propaganda and provocative actions against each other.
4. With the objective of promoting a friendly and harmonious relationship between Pakistan and India, the Foreign Secretaries have agreed as follows :
 - a. to address all outstanding issues of concern to both sides including, inter alias :
 - b. Peace and security, including CBMs
 - c. Jammu and Kashmir
 - d. Siachen
 - e. Wullar Barrage Project / Tulbul Navigation Project
 - f. Sir Creek
 - g. Terrorism and drug-trafficking
 - h. Economic and Commercial Cooperation
 - i. Promotion of friendly exchanges in various fields
 - j. to set up a mechanism, including working groups at appropriate levels, to address all these issues in an integrated manner. The issues at (a) and (b) above will be dealt with at the level of Foreign Secretaries who will also coordinate and monitor the progress of work of all the working groups.
5. The two Foreign Secretaries also had a preliminary exchange of views on the composition of the working groups and their methodology. It was decided to continue the consideration of this matter through diplomatic channels.
6. The next round of Foreign Secretary-level talks will take place in New Delhi in September 1997.

Press Statement by the Foreign Secretary of Pakistan

We had started work in New Delhi on identifying the outstanding issues between India and Pakistan and on devising a mechanism to address them purposefully. This aspect of our work has been completed and the result is before you in the shape of the joint statement.

I am happy to state that we have successfully completed the first stage of the task entrusted to us by our two Prime Ministers. As you will note the two sides have agreed to address all outstanding issues with a view to achieving the goal of good neighbourly and cooperative relations.

We hope that the mechanism on which we have agreed will initiate progress towards the settlement of all outstanding issues listed in the joint statement. On our part, we will continue the dialogue with sincerity and serious purpose.

We have no illusions about the complexity of the work ahead of us. It is important for both sides now to take steps to create conditions conducive to make the process purposeful and result-oriented.

Statement by the Foreign Secretary of India

The Joint Statement, which is with you, really speaks for itself. In our view, it provides the basis for comprehensive, constructive and sustained dialogue between India and Pakistan. It is the result of four days of intensive discussions. These have been part of the process initiated in Delhi in keeping with the directions given by the two Prime Ministers. The Joint Statement identifies and lists out a number of subjects. It also sets out a mechanism for dialogue including Working Groups. Preliminary discussions have also taken place on constituting the Working Groups and their modalities. These aspects will be discussed further in Delhi when the Foreign Secretaries meet in September. It is our purpose that the dialogue leads to establishment of trust, friendship and cooperation between the two countries.

Joint Press Statement

Pursuant to the decision of the Prime Ministers of Pakistan and India to exchange fishing boats and crew presently in the custody of either side, the matter was discussed in detail during the Foreign Secretary level talks. The two sides have now verified 26 Pakistani boats and 195 crew and 25 Indian boats and 194 crew. It has been decided to release them by July 15, 1997. It has also been decided that other boats and crew will be released as and when identified.

New Delhi
June 23, 1997