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## **Cricket for Politics and Peace; from 1987 to 2007 Cricket World Cup between India and Pakistan**

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### **Abstract**

This research paper will discussed the effectiveness of cricket on both nations as cricket is very popular sport in this region particularly in India and Pakistan. The history of Cricket series between India and Pakistan from 1987 to 2007 cricket world cup will also be analyzed that how cricket was effective during these periods to release the tension of both countries. This study conveyed that the power of Cricket proved a peaceful solution of every circumstance between India and Pakistan can be resolved as compare to the gun diplomacy.

**Keywords:** Cricket, Political Pitch. Cricket world cup 2007, Cricket series 2004, Cricket Ties, Vajpayee, Nawaz Sharif

## Introduction

Cricket is a most famous sport in all over the world including very popular in India and Pakistan since their Independence. India and Pakistan has 4 wars after their Independence. However, sports and politics have had both positive and negative implications over history. Nationalistic fervor are sometimes linked to victory or loss on sports fields. In case of India and Pakistan, cricket has frequently been the victim of poor relations between these neighbors with tours blocked for years because of bad-blood; nevertheless, it has also been used to build trust and confidence when ties are improving. Cricket diplomacy can play great role in enhancing bilateral relations of India and Pakistan but with the affirmative media presentation.

Relations between India and Pakistan have been troubled from the start as their history demonstrates. Their cricketing relationship has throughout this period reflected their political relationship, and bilateral cricket has as previously mentioned been treated as a political matter. Cricket has contributed to communal and regional divisions in South Asia, and high levels of passion are often incited when matches are played. At the same time, it is the common love of the entire region, and has contributed to a feeling of unity for diversified populations. Therefore, the idea that cricket can function as a 'bridge of peace' (Khan, 2005:180) between Indians and Pakistanis will be the starting point of this discussion, which will deal with the Indo-Pakistani cricketing and political relationship from the advent of cricket diplomacy in 1987.

## History of Cricket Ties

Since President Zia's cricket diplomacy raised the hope of a more forthcoming Pakistani policy in 1987 (Cohen, 2001:208), India and Pakistan have engaged in bilateral cricket contests on six more occasions (Cricinfo, 2007). India toured Pakistan in November-December 1989 for a full Test series, but after the Kashmiri uprising in 1989 and ensuing crisis in 1990 led to soured relations between the two countries (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:78), bilateral cricket relations suffered. Relations between India and Pakistan then deteriorated further after the demolition of the Babri Mosque in Ayodhya, India, by Hindu extremists in 1992 (Guha, 2002:400). The destruction sparked communal violence in large parts of India, and put Hindu-Muslim relations to the test. Thus, the political climate that prevailed between India and Pakistan after 1989 put an effective stop to bilateral cricket.

This is the short-version of the game, lasting only one day. A Test match can last for as much as five days. Racine (2004:131) argues that president Zia's 1987 version of cricket diplomacy was purely cosmetic, and that nothing had changed ten years later. India had not toured Pakistan due to wretched political conditions since 1989, but in September-October 1997, they played a limited number of One Day International matches in Pakistan. This was the first bilateral cricket contest on Indian or Pakistani soil in eight years, but the following year both states exploded nuclear devices, contributing to heightened tensions and a growing fear of what escalation of the conflict could lead to. In other words, Indo-Pakistani tensions were put to the test once more, and bilateral cricket suffered as a consequence. After the nuclear tests in 1998, there was a realisation at the government level that tensions needed to be eased (Schofield, 2003:207). When the prime ministers of India and Pakistan met at the SAARC meeting in Sri Lanka in July, they both agreed to resume formal talks. The culmination of these talks was Indian Prime Minister Vajpayee's historic and symbolically significant visit

on the inaugural run of the Delhi-Lahore bus service on 20 February 1999 (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:151; Talbott, 2006:153). The Lahore Summit in 1999 between Prime Minister Vajpayee and his Pakistani counterpart, Nawaz Sharif, represented a considerable thaw in Indo-Pakistani relations (Nasr, 2005:195). This thaw in the relations was rooted in mutual interests of the governments and was directed at measured steps towards de-escalation of tensions. In the region, Vajpayee's trip resulting in the Lahore Declaration was even hailed as comparable to Richard Nixon's trip to China in 1971, which followed the successful ping-pong diplomacy.

With relations warming once more, the two countries' Prime Ministers played an important part in the decision to resume cricketing ties in 1999. This was the first Pakistani tour of India since 1987, and it came only the year after both countries conducted tit-for-tat nuclear tests that had created yet another crisis in Indo-Pakistani relations (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:116). There was some controversy in both countries over whether the tour should be undertaken or not. In India, the tour faced strong opposition from the Hindu extremists of the right wing party Shiv Sena, who threatened the Pakistani team if they travelled to India. They even went to the step of digging up the cricket pitch in Delhi (Bhattacharya, 2005:11; Khan, 2005:3). In Pakistan, on the other hand, the debate saw opinion divided between the pro-tour lobby who felt that a successful tour could help reduce cross-border tensions, and those who feared that a tour of India would 'unnecessarily risk a deterioration of relations' (Khan, 2005:4). The cricket players as symbolic representatives in other words carried the worries and expectations of their home countries on their shoulders. The tour went ahead in January-February 1999, and Shaharyar M. Khan (2005:vii-viii), manager of the Pakistan cricket team during the tour and later chairman of the Pakistan Cricket Board, describes how cricket diplomacy provided communicational opportunities and conversational space wherever they travelled. In every Indian city the team visited, they were greeted with genuine goodwill, and everywhere the message was the same: to let bygones be bygones, that there was so much to gain, so much in common. After the first test match of the tour in Chennai, the victorious Pakistanis even received a standing ovation from the 40,000 Indian spectators in the stands. Such 'positive waves of goodwill' that the crowd emitted surpassed in Khan's view anything that had happened at the popular level in the history of India-Pakistan relations. The sum of these unexpectedly warm welcomes by the people of India to the 'enemy' team was the sentiments that, Khan contends, encouraged Prime Minister Vajpayee's famous bus-journey to Pakistan and the Lahore Summit. Khan (2005:72) claims that the public relations success and good spirit surrounding the cricket tour helped pave the way for this 'diplomatic milestone.' Cricket players as symbolic representatives therefore had an important part to play when it came to bolstering the fresh peace process by providing a channel of communication between the populations of the nuclear neighbours.

All good things can't last, however, and despite the apparent success of cricket diplomacy in 1999, the Lahore Summit did not live up to its goals and failed to contribute to a significant amelioration of Indo-Pakistani tensions (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:151). Much of the goodwill created by the 1999 tour was washed away by the Kargil war and the Indian Airlines hijacking by Pakistan-based 'Islamic radicals' in 1999 (Cohen, 2001:207; Talbott, 2006:185). After these incidents, the Indian government decided a renewed ban on bilateral cricket until Pakistan changed its stance and stopped supporting the insurgency in Kashmir (Bhattacharya, 2005: 10; Chatterjee, 2004:613; Sengupta, 2004:605). It has even been argued that 'Kargil destroyed any sub continental solidarity that had existed previously' (Sengupta, 2004:606).

General Musharraf's assumption of power in Pakistan in 1999, as well as the attack on the Indian parliament, the Lok Sabha, in December 2001 contributed to renewed tensions that damaged relations even further (Ganguly & Hagerty, 2005:167). In consequence, cricket diplomacy succumbed once more due to deteriorating political conditions.

War seemed imminent throughout 2002, and as a result India refused to play Pakistan at cricket or any other sport (Khan, 2005:103).

### **Re-established of Diplomatic Process**

The diplomatic process between the two countries was re-established once again in 2003 with the resumption of the bus service between Delhi and Lahore in May, and the agreement of a ceasefire in Kashmir in November (BBC News, 2005b). The peace process had in this way received a new lease on life, and cricket was considered by the two governments as a vehicle for developing mutual trust between their populations. In the first week of January 2004, Vajpayee and president Musharraf met in Islamabad on the margins of a SAARC summit. Vajpayee agreed to talks on all issues, including Kashmir, and a roadmap to peace was agreed upon in principle (Talbot, 2006:219). In addition, it was agreed to re-establish bilateral cricketing ties. This meant that India would undertake the first full cricket tour of Pakistan since 1989, despite some of the same debate as in 1999 regarding whether the tour should be undertaken or not (Bhattacharya, 2005:193). In the end, Prime Minister Vajpayee himself took the decision that India should tour (Ibid. 9). The Indian tour of Pakistan in any case represented the thawing of a 14-year freeze in bilateral full test series (Windor, 2004). Ramiz Raja, chief executive officer of the Pakistan Cricket Board commented on the breakthrough, saying that 'until people from both sides meet and develop trust, these things cannot be resolved and cricket can be a major vehicle for this' (CNN, 2003). The thawing of relations between India and Pakistan therefore provided the perfect timing for cricket diplomacy. The Indian cricket team's tour of Pakistan in March-April was labelled 'the Friendship Series,' and the tour lived up to its name. While previous series had been marred by occasional riots, mob violence and murders, this time around things were different. There was something new happening, one reporter observed: 'Pakistani fans draped in the Indian flag, Indian fans celebrating among them, in the heartland of Pakistani extremism' (Astill, 2004). Even Imran Khan, one of Pakistan's greatest cricketers of all time and a member of parliament, observing this feeling of friendship, said that 'I've never seen an Indian-Pakistan game with an atmosphere like this ... it is if we're saying, "War is no longer an option – we need something new"' (Ibid.). Others joined in, saying that sporting exchanges such as this were 'good therapy' for the relations between India and Pakistan. But, at the same time, such exchanges can also inflame passions and carry the risk of cutting both ways (Pennington, 2004). This did not happen, though, as the friendly atmosphere prevailed.

The Friendship Series worked wonders for building confidence between Indians and Pakistan. Even though it was the first time India had won at cricket in Pakistan, there was no violence or trouble. On the contrary, the Indian team got standing ovations at more than one occasion during the tour (Bhattacharya, 2005). Vajpayee's farewell message to the Indian cricket players had been: 'Win not only matches, but hearts too' (Ibid. 30). Not only did the Indian cricketers get a good reception in Pakistan, but those tens of thousands of Indian fans and journalists who also crossed the border, went back to India remembering a hospitality and

welcome they had not imagined possible from their ‘enemies.’ Thus, they had gone back to India ‘acting as Pakistan’s ambassadors’ (Khan, 2005:187).

The Indian cricket team’s 2004 tour of Pakistan can be considered both a track-two and track-three initiative. It provided the athletes with an opportunity to play each other in an atmosphere of friendship and unity. These symbolic representatives of their states engaged in friendly competition on the field, which mirrored the developments in the political arena. This meant that the cricket tour had positive effects for the peace process in the sense that it provided unprecedented visibility and publicity. Additionally, thousands of Indian supporters visited Pakistan during the series, and encountered for the most part the same atmosphere and friendship, as they rediscovered that Indians and Pakistanis share the same culture and history. The series provided the single biggest window there had been in almost fifty years for a people to talk to another, and it took place in the name of a cricket contest (Bhattacharya, 2005:309). This is one of the benefits of sport exchanges highlighted by the UN report *Sport for Development and Peace*, and an important aspect of the term conversational space. The channels of communication provided by cricket diplomacy therefore played an important part in the further strengthening of the peace process and its popularity in the minds of ordinary Indians and Pakistanis. Sporting contest therefore also constitute a sort of barometer of the public or collective psyche of a population, and provides crucial input for state leaders on how to proceed with the process. Finally, cricket matches also present state leaders with an opportunity to meet under the auspices watching the game, in order to have talks over the opening of negotiations or to continue with other measures of rapprochement. With the success of the 2004 Friendship Series fresh in mind, it was decided to carry on the momentum with another cricket series. Pakistan subsequently undertook a full tour of India in February-April 2005. This time around, the series played an even more significant diplomatic role as it gave the leaders of both countries a ‘new momentum’ for the opportunity to meet (Cherian, 2005). Pakistani president Pervez Musharraf expressed his wish to travel to India, much like president Zia-ul Haq had done in 1987, virtually inviting himself ostensibly to watch cricket but mainly to discuss political issues. By making his arrival known through a media interview, the Indian government was left with little choice but to extend a formal invitation to the Pakistani president. Musharraf’s attempt at cricket diplomacy came at a time of an ongoing peace process, but it still caught New Delhi with nearly as much surprise as Zia had in 1987. As the talks were to begin, Musharraf let it be known that ‘the core issue’ of Kashmir was more important than cricket, and that it would be the most important topic for the talks with the Indian leadership (Reddy, 2005). The Pakistani Information Minister remarked on this saying that: ‘The president will watch cricket for some time but he will play more on the political pitch’ (Daily Times, 2005). The Delhi match provided Musharraf with an opportunity to speed up the official dialogue process, which the Pakistanis felt India was stalling (Croft, 2005:1055-1056). Musharraf and Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh watched the match in Delhi side by side, and pictures of the two leaders were broadcast throughout the world (Crick, 2006:46). Furthermore, in a joint press conference after their talks, they announced that now ‘the peace process was irreversible’ (Croft, 2005:1041). Cricket thus provided the conversational space for Indian and Pakistani leaders to meet and discuss on political conflict areas. This added to the success of unofficial cricket diplomacy and people-to-people contact that had been the hallmark of the two foregoing series, showing how these earlier efforts contributed to backing up talks at the official level. Unofficial in nature as cricket diplomacy is, it has an added official level as well. Moreover, cricket diplomacy had now really found its pace, and in April the same year the first passengers from

either side of the border crossed divided Kashmir as the landmark bus service across the ceasefire line dividing Indian- and Pakistani-controlled Kashmir got underway (BBC News, 2005b). The normalisation of political and cricketing links between India and Pakistan led to the third successive instalment of bilateral cricket in January-February 2006 (Marqusee, 2006), with India this time touring Pakistan. This can be seen as good news for anyone concerned about the future of peace in South Asia. In short, the recent cricket tours exemplify the claim that 'sports bring people and nations together' as they create a shared language, shared passions and highlight our ways of interacting with one another (Sengupta, 2004:587). 2007 marks the twentieth anniversary of the birth of the term cricket diplomacy. The peace process re-ignited in 2003 has survived so far, and leaders in both countries have showed their commitment to the process. India and Pakistan both participated in the World Cup of cricket in February-April 2007, which meant that the annual fixture was not held, but cricket has nonetheless been an important part of the current Indo-Pakistani peace process. On the one hand, cricketers as symbolic representatives of their respective states provide the peace efforts with high visibility by engaging in friendly competition on the field. Bilateral cricket matches would not have come about without official sanction, however, but once employed it plays a significant part in strengthening the process. Cricket diplomacy has also provided channels of communication, which provided at the right time, can help shape a better understanding between Indians and Pakistanis.

### **Recommendations**

1. Both of the governments need more Dialogue at political levels to improve the relations.
2. Just cricket can not create peace between two nation and both political systems must took step to arrange other sport competitions for strong relations.
3. Hockey can be useful for more relations as a part of sport and political Diplomacy.
4. The issues of sport and related to Kashmir must be discussed and should be resolved according to the UN Law of Independency.
5. UN should must play a role to resolve these issues including sport.
6. All the saarc countries should also organized a meeting to play their political role to release the tension.
7. Indian and Pakistani political parties must respect the peoples of Kashmir including their Armies
8. The government of both countries must make strict laws to seas fires on the border areas of both nations.
9. The armed forces of both countries must respect to each other nation especially on the border areas.
10. Both forces must play a positive role by organizing meetings to stop and respect the seize fire on border areas so that the safety of the residents population of these areas could be sure.
11. Media of both nations should also play a positive role for this purpose.

## Conclusion

According to the President Pervaiz Musharaf the cricket pitch can be useful for the development of relations if there is any ice which can not be broken. No doubt a lot of cricket series has been played during the time of 1987 to 2007 between India and Pakistan but the nothing much was outcome of these series which shows that the series were very useful including world cup matches during these periods except just to break the ice for a short period. Playing a lot of cricket series does not mean to resolve the disputes. So the cricket is the basic tool of diplomacy between two nations. Cricket is used as a political tool to play on Political pitch to bridge the gap in the diplomatic vacuum between two Cricket playing nations. The cricket Is the opposite of the gun diplomacy in which forces are deployed. It is concluded that the power of Cricket proved that a peaceful solution of every circumstances between India and Pakistan can be resolved as compare to the gun diplomacy.

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