

IWA series; CIBSA our response to the ICID challenge

The Indian Water Aggression (IWA) is to be analyzed in a series of articles

Water is our most important endowment. The alarming reduction in Indus Basin waters entering Pakistan are undeniable signs of an orchestrated policy by the Indian Authorities. The advice of Mohammad Ali Jinnah about Kashmir being the main life sustaining artery of Pakistan has now been finally appreciated by his countrymen. The Indians clearly understood the strategic value of Kashmir waters and manipulated the “accession” & defacto military occupation of the State of Jammu & Kashmir. They ensured their status as the upper riparian for Indus waters. Their actions defied common sense and the democratic values they propagate but for them “the ends justified the means”. I estimate that it is the intention of the Indians to now squeeze at least 3MAF annually of our surface water flows in a sequential progression.

We have to be more perceptive and understand that the water resource is the cause of all our major internal frictions. The distrust between the provinces over Irrigation waters has pitted brother against brother. A result of Pakistan’s failure to build the main reservoirs after Tarbela (1974) on its three western rivers; understood as its share of the Indus system in the Indus Waters Treaty of 1960. These proposed reservoirs were a critical element of the extended “replacement works” that would have kept the Ravi & Sutlej superficially alive through the “Link Canals” it had inherited as part of the IBIS (Indus Basin Irrigation System). Rivers sustain civilizations. What a mess we have created due to this atmosphere of distrust. Who to blame?

The anti-dam lobby became vocal first via the pro-Indian lobby of Walibagh, KP. Dams do not create floods they control floods. The 1929 Nowshera valley flooding was repeated in 2010. KBD does not exist. The anti KBD lobby including Chairman WAPDA now insist that if KBD had existed the damage would have been greater. All hydrologists understand that the Nowshera flooding is always caused by its location between the smaller Nowshera gorge & the longer Attock gorge. The KBD site being +100km downstream of the Attock gorge would have had no influence. In fact more dams would mean more regulation & flood control, especially downstream of the structure. With respect to the imaginary water logging of Mardan/Charsada & Peshawar valleys how can capillary action of 40 ft be possible against all laws of physics? The lowest point of KP at 955ft asl is 40 ft higher than design of KBD max crest level at 915ft.

The rise of the Sindh anti-dam lobby in retrospect gets visible after the birth of Bangladesh. The Indians put a successful formula to work and we again went to sleep. Since Sindh needs fresh water more desperately than Punjab. Sindh has negligible sweet water aquifers. It is the extra flow of the short flood/monsoon season that will be stored in the proposed KBD & other new reservoirs. This will allow the main rivers to be kept vibrant for the remaining 10 months. All these issues (external & internal) need a neutral & credible national organization operating under military discipline. Should hydrology & hydrologic issues remain in confusion?

I estimate that the Indian factor; its interference in our Indus Basin flows (directly & indirectly) has already inflicted a loss of over USD one trillion plus on Pakistan’s nascent economy. This loss will now grow exponentially because the loss has snowballed into an energy crisis resulting in a catastrophe for our industry & agriculture. The Hydrel to thermal ratio has become 30:70, ie: completely lopsided. Indus basin flows are having extreme variations; some years more than 33 times from minimum to maximum. Therefore an unavoidable element of 30% thermal energy was determined after great analysis. Having been frustrated in our attempts to develop more hydropower we became suicidal & starting in 1988 accelerating by 1992 & consummating by 1994 produced an IPP policy based primarily on imported energy that was hazardous & unsustainable. The IBIS an asset with replacement value, today, of more than USD 500bn is our prime national asset. We have not been able to optimize & utilize this vital gift. Our irrigated agriculture can be increased from 42mn acres to 63mn acres within 10 years. Triple cropping patterns will emerge when water is plentiful. Agro based industry would flourish. Let us jointly

understand its potential to break the poverty cycle & enrich our coming generations. We may revive the TVA concept which is the basis of WAPDA but handover the Power Distribution/Discos to the provinces as per the 1973 Constitution. The IPP thermal private policy of 1994 based on the failed California model maybe capped as it is unsustainable. It has failed in California & also in Pakistan. Let us not forget that a very conservative estimate of our hydel potential is +65,000MW generating annually over 350bn units (350,000 GWh). This is more than triple of Pakistan's electric energy generation in 2011. Let CIBSA finally educate the nation about the "hydro truths". Pakistan incidentally has now less than 8% of storage capability of its 145MAF annual surface flow. The role of sweet water is central to Pakistan's financial sustainability and survival. It is blessed with five of the seven largest glaciers on the planet.

Global warming & the water bomb: Pakistan Commissioner Indus Waters (PCIW) secretariat at Lahore deals with the cases related to the Indus Waters Treaty (IWT 1960). The commission works under the overall control of the Federal Ministry of Water & Power at Islamabad. While the Indus River System Authority (IRSA) also works directly under the Federal Ministry of Water & Power and manages the distribution of Indus Basin Waters to the provinces. The inter-provincial water disputes became manageable after the signing of the Water Apportionment Accord (WAA) in March 1991 and the creation of IRSA as a result in 1992. However both PCIW & IRSA lack the required punch due to deficient technical depth & commitment. In the case of PCIW secretariat it is shamefully under-equipped to face a diabolical, merciless & relentless upper riparian neighbor. PCIW must not depend on Indian data. If you look deeper the direct Indian factor again emerges. The Indian organization "International Commission for Irrigation & Drainage" established in 1950 has developed an "India First" agenda and through guile & cunning positioned itself in a position of great influence with multilateral institutions & government agencies worldwide. ICID is a dangerous weapon. Mr. Kamal Majidullah beware.

The ICID now serves hundreds of international clients & even multi-lateral agencies. What is most relevant is that they have the tools to analyze accurately the hydrologic cycle of the Indus Basin. In contrast PCIW has constantly stated that he has no data or information of the inflows in IHK rivers & streams. If the watershed in Kashmir is not understood how does Pakistan expect to neutralize the Indian strategy? Secondly every Indian move leading to attrition of water flows into Pakistan is blamed on the altar of "Global Warming". Yes glacier retreat is ongoing everywhere but this for the interim means more water in the rivers! This is clearly the rationale for the Northern River Linking project of India; a USD 212bn project launched in 2006 based on the famous Prabhu report of 1999. Let CIBSA help us understand that global warming & glacier retreat is a reality. Where is the expected increase in the inflow of Jhelum & Chenab? Nearly 40MAF additionally for the next 30 to 40 years were estimated. India will never disclose this bonanza although not available till eternity. They declared their intention to install +28,000MW of Hydel capability in IHK. The exact water diversion in IHK needs a deep analysis.

Our Closed Door talks in New Delhi during end July 10 had resulted in the Indian side agreeing on a joint watershed study in IHK. How do we implement it if there is no organization in Pakistan to provide the expertise? We need a motivated team that can face all the techno-legal issues around the IWT 1960 especially to neutralize Indian violations & transgressions. The ridiculous decision by the Neutral Expert on Baghliar 1 is a contradiction of the basic spirit of the IWT 1960. If low level gates are permitted below the dead level under the pretext of silt excluder then who will ensure that these are not misused. A dangerous precedent that cannot be accepted. There is no monitoring of IHK hydro sites which are no-go areas for all outsiders. Can three bureaucrats or technocrats sitting in the PCIW Secretariat take on thousands in the ICID? The creation of CIBSA is therefore overdue by atleast 52 years which is the age of the IWT 1960. Let our engineers, scientists & technicians come forward to serve CIBSA.

Pakistan Paindabad

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