

## Collaborative Networks & Partnerships for Possible Joint Studies (Session VII) (An outline sketch)

There is indeed a massive “trust deficit” that several roundtables may have partly attenuated but a radical departure of this present format now looks necessary. The Upper Riparian would need to play “big brother” as this issue assumes ever increasing dimensions of its multi-faceted personality. Great power aspirations mean greater responsibilities.

Since the “Preamble” outline paper I sent on the eve of the New Delhi Closed Door Conference (July 2010) there may have been deeper analyses and understanding of the issues but we have not really carried out any joint study in this period inspite of great need. The Lower Riparian complains that flow data is neither available nor accurate and only sporadically received. The Upper Riparian has technologically advanced tools at its disposal and could address this “trust deficit” on the Indus Basin flows. Equally critical for Pakistan is the state of its aquifers south of the Potohar plateau. When man interrupts perennial flows we need certain safeguards to achieve the required sustainability & balance of the aquifers. Unregulated mining of this precious resource continues under compulsion. A great ecological disaster is apparent.

IWT 1960 ignored drinking water needs. It did not foresee major environmental factors which later resulted in terrible ecological damage. The process is ongoing in Central & South Punjab. Can we raise awareness amongst the Indian intelligentsia & men of peace? All is not well in the matter of water cooperation in the Indus Basin. It is the “Politics of Water” gone astray.

Let us look at the new literature from India. Mr. Brahma Chellaney’s book “Water - Asia’s New Battleground”, is a sad example of aggressive intent. His thesis and approach is 180 deg opposed to the talk of water cooperation & sharing of the Indus basin. He is legitimizing Water Wars. Someone should give him a copy of the UN-Water Analytical Brief “Water Security & the Global Water Agenda”. The relationship between Water and Human Security is described very clearly. It says that Water is a multi-dimensional issue and a prerequisite for achieving human security from the individual to the international level. Human security is dependent on an individual’s sense and level of well being with these being closely tied to the individual’s need for water and the benefits it provides. Water security can therefore reduce the potential for conflicts & tensions, contributing to significant social, development, economic & environmental benefits on a larger scale, as well as to the realization of states’ international obligations.

Now to the letter & spirit of the IWT 1960. We face a ridiculous “the then” controversy, when uninterrupted & non-consumptive use should be paramount. The fact that the Lower Riparian has intention to use the water must not be ignored. World Bank gave one side the ownership but not the possession. The preamble states “All” & “Unrestricted”. Therefore Pakistan has the same rights on these three Western Rivers as India has over the three Eastern Rivers, inspite of the territorial situation. We have observed violent hydrological changes due to Climate Change. We must not fly blind anymore. Pakistan simply has to know the changes in flows of the UIB & HKH region. The terrible floods of 2010 could have been foreseen with better management.

The ongoing damage to the ecology of 8 MA of South Punjab due to the IWT 1960 has indeed driven a great wedge. The Lower Riparian will simply not accept anything less than a joint master study. I am compelled to propose that instead of the “Brahma Chellaney” prophesies we need third party assistance. Both J&K as well as AJK are difficult for either side to access. Perhaps this openness can finally address the “trust deficit” and push both our nations to get down to the task of breaking the cycles of poverty, ignorance & disease. God bless you all.

Suleman Najib Khan – Bangalore 17 Feb 2014