

## **Prolonged Conflict and Reconciliation between India and Pakistan\***

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The paper looks at the sources and trajectory of the conflicts between India and Pakistan which have colonial and post-colonial elements. The paper identifies religious identity, partition, border disputes, and Pakistan's quest for symmetry with India through various arrangements as the primary causes of the India-Pakistan conflict. The paper also talks about various governmental and non-governmental reconciliation attempts between the two countries in the last seven decades. Although these reconciliation attempts have not been very successful, they have maintained some minimal exchange between the two countries. Finally, the paper analyzes the causes of the prolongation of the India and Pakistan conflict by enumerating various spoilers in the process. These spoilers have been the domestic politics of India and Pakistan, terrorist groups operating from Pakistan, the domestic political power structure of Pakistan, and the rise of Hindu nationalism in India along with economic backwardness. Finally, the paper concludes that the prospect for peace between the two countries in the short-term appears improbable.

**Keywords:** India-Pakistan Relations, Conflict between India and Pakistan, Reconciliation between India and Pakistan, Trajectory of Conflict between India and Pakistan, Spoilers in India-Pakistan Relations.

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## I. Introduction

The conflict between India and Pakistan since the very emergence of two states has been one of the most destabilizing factors in South Asia. Until now, both countries have fought three full-scale wars in 1948, 1965, and 1971 and had a half-war in Kargil in 1999.<sup>1</sup> Apart from these three and half wars, both countries have had thousands of ceasefire violations and almost on a daily basis their armed forces open fire at each other on the border. The border between both countries, which has been demarcated by the Radcliffe Line, is contested on the ground. The territorial control of India and Pakistan at present is not on the basis of the Radcliffe Line but rather on the basis of the Line of Control (LOC). Part of the state of Jammu and Kashmir, which officially got acceded in the Indian union, is occupied by Pakistan and it remains one of the several bones of contention between India and Pakistan.<sup>2</sup> In 1998 both countries tested their nuclear arsenals and now are de-facto nuclear powers. Apart from the issue of Jammu and Kashmir, both countries also have several border disputes such as the Siachen glacier, Sir Creek, and river-water distribution.

It is reported that Pakistan adopted a policy of proxy war against India after its realization that India's capacity in conventional arms is superior to Pakistan. Pakistan adopted a policy of destabilizing India through sabotage and supported subversive groups through money, training, and arms-ammunitions in various provinces of India, including Jammu, Kashmir, and Punjab. Under its strategy of proxy war, Pakistan not only provided financial and military help to various disgruntled groups in Indian politics but also allowed religious terrorist groups to use Pakistani soil for organization, training, and

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1. For the history of the India-Pakistan Conflict see, T.V. Paul, ed. *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).
  2. Kanti P. Bajpai, P. R. Chari, Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, Stephen P. Cohen, and Sumit Ganguly, *Brasstacks and Beyond: Perception and Management of Crisis in South Asia* (New Delhi: Manohar, 1987).

financing terrorist activities in India.<sup>3</sup> India claims that these terrorists and terrorist groups are encouraged, supported, funded, and protected by the Pakistani state. Pakistan also alleges that India supports subversive groups in Pakistan, especially in Karachi, Baluchistan, and Sindh.<sup>4</sup>

The state of conflict between India and Pakistan is so entrenched and inscrutable that both countries forget to appreciate their common historical experiences and their cultural commonality. Even though there have been attempts at reconciliation between the two countries, these attempts have not gone very far. For several years, both countries have not been directly talking to each other while their respective leaders keep challenging each other in various public pronouncements. Apart from state-to-state attempts at reconciliation, there have also been a plethora of track-2 and track 1.5 processes which sought to connect the government, business and people between the two countries. But all these attempts have not had much of an effect on the state of affairs.

The paper attempts to delineate the source and trajectory of the conflicts between India and Pakistan. In the process, there have been several agreements and other reconciliation measures between the two countries and these reconciliation attempts will also be described. After identifying spoilers in the reconciliation process between India and Pakistan, the paper concludes that the prospect for peace between the two countries in the short-term appears improbable.

## **II. Theoretical Arguments**

It is a challenge to comprehend the course of the conflicts between India and Pakistan through any single theoretical framework available

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3 Navnita Chadha Behera, *Demystifying Kashmir* (Washington D.C.: The Brookings Institution, 2006).

4 Grumeet Kanwal, *Pakistan's Proxy War* (New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 2002) and Kanti Shankar Bajpai, "Untangling India and Pakistan," *Foreign Affairs*, vol. 82, no. 3 (2003), pp. 112-126.

in the literature of international relations theory. There are also limitations in international relations theory in explaining the lack of success in the attempts to reconcile the conflicts between both countries in the past and present. The conflict and reconciliation processes between India and Pakistan make sense in part by applying various theoretical streams of international relations theory such as neo-realism, neo-liberalism, and constructivism. Furthermore, several other middle range theories such as the regional security complex theory of Barry Buzan and Ole Waever,<sup>5</sup> the theory of subaltern realism of Mohammed Ayoob<sup>6</sup> and the two-level game theory of Robert D. Putnam<sup>7</sup> could also help in understanding the few important parts of India-Pakistan relations. Actually, most of the existing theories of international relations are largely ahistorical in their application to the third world countries and thus have limited explanatory values.<sup>8</sup> In the above context there have been arguments to articulate a global international relations theory, which is historical, contextual, and heterogeneous.<sup>9</sup> However, such a quest is still a distant goal and the paper, meanwhile, tries to take an eclectic approach and brings in specific components of existing theories to explain various aspects of conflict and reconciliations between India and Pakistan. Constructivism

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5 Barry Buzan and Ole Waever, *Regions and Powers: The Structure of International Security* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003).

6 Mohammed Ayoob, "Inequality and Theorizing in International Relations: The Case for Subaltern Realism," *International Studies Review*, vol. 4, no. 3 (2002), pp. 27-48.

7 Robert D. Putnam, "Diplomacy and Domestic Politics: The Logic of Two-Level Games," *International Organization*, vol. 42, no. 3 (1988), pp. 427-460.

8 See Mohammed Ayoob, "Subaltern Realism: International Relations Theory Meets the Third World," pp. 31-49, Carlos Escude, "An Introduction to Peripheral Realism and its Implications for the Interstate System: Argentina and the Condor II Missile Project," pp. 55-76, and Amitav Acharya, "Beyond Anarchy: Third World Instability and International Order After the Cold War," pp. 159-212, all in Stephanie G. Neuman, ed., *International Relations Theory and the Third World* (London: Macmillan, 1998).

9 Amitav Acharya, "Global International Relations (IR) and Regional Worlds: A New Agenda for International Studies," *International Studies Quarterly*, vol. 58, no. 4 (2014), pp. 647-659.

is probably the most important theory capable of understanding the complex and multilayered relations between India and Pakistan. It brings in variables such as history, identity, and memory in its explanatory scheme, which are quite salient in India-Pakistan relations.<sup>10</sup> Neo-realist theory is also instructive in the India-Pakistan relations. The theory emphasizes that states are located in an anarchic international system and observes that states try to protect themselves through self-strengthening and making alliances.<sup>11</sup> The neo-realist theory of international relations is also useful as it propounds that a lack of institutions and economic exchanges pose important challenges to reconciliations between states and prolong conflicts between them.

There are elements of both soft and hard issues intertwined in the India and Pakistan conflicts. The colonial past as well as the process of decolonization of India led to the emergence of several ideational issues between the two countries such as the issues of national identity, religious identity, and the memory of loss, suffering, and humiliation. These issues are still very significant in the bilateral exchanges of the two countries. The constructivist theory is quite useful in underlining the importance of such factors in the bilateral relations of the two countries. These variables are very contestable and complex between the two countries, and they could be used to understand the prolonged conflict between India and Pakistan. Even though there have been several attempts of reconciliations from both sides at the state and civil society levels, there has been no significant forward movement.

Another dimension of the India-Pakistan rivalry in the post-colonial era could be understood better by applying the neo-realist theory of international relations. Given the asymmetry between India and Pakistan, Pakistan has tried to use external alliances and strategic cooperation with third countries to counterbalance India. There has been a shift in the main strategic partner of Pakistan from the U.S. to China in

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10 For the importance of theories of constructivism along with realism in explaining India-Pakistan conflicts, see Arndt Michael, "Realist-Constructivism and the India-Pakistan Conflict: A New Theoretical Approach for an Old Rivalry," *Asian Politics and Policy*, vol. 10, no. 1 (2018), pp. 100-114.

11 Kenneth Waltz, *Theory of International Politics* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

last seventy years, but Pakistan's strategy has been consistent in this regard. Furthermore, apart from external alliances, Pakistan has disproportionately used its valuable resources for its military augmentation<sup>12</sup> and thus both the elements of self-help postulated in the neo-realist theory—self-strengthening and external alliance have an obvious presence in Pakistan's foreign policy behavior. Pakistan has also tried to balance India through its strategy of proxy war and acquiring nuclear weapons. Such behavior on the part of Pakistan has been responsible for the escalation of its conflicts with India. Pakistan's attempts to protect itself against India have led to a situation of 'security dilemma.' The theory of security dilemma postulates that between two rival states, one state's quest for security is considered a source of insecurity by the other one and when there is a similar response by the other state, the first state becomes less rather than more secure.<sup>13</sup>

The prolongation of India-Pakistan conflicts could also be explained by a lack of institutions, regimes, and insufficient economic exchanges between the two countries. These variables are considered important by the neo-liberal theory of international relations. Although, it is difficult to ascertain whether the lack of effective institutions in South Asia is a cause or consequence of India-Pakistan conflict, it definitely has an important role in determining the nature and outcomes of conflicts and reconciliations between India and Pakistan.<sup>14</sup> Actually, on various occasions, when leaders of India-Pakistan set out to resolve their conflicts, both of them negotiate to each other along with a parallel dialogue with their own domestic audiences. Robert D. Putnam has carefully deciphered such double layers of negotiations in the inter-state negotiations, which complicate the process of reconciliation and the insight of his theory is quite useful

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12 M. K. Hassan, M. Waheed Uzzaman and A.Rahman, "Defense Expenditure and Economic Growth in the SAARC Countries," *The Journal of Political, Social and Economic Studies*, vol. 28, no. 3 (2003), pp. 275-293.

13 Ghulam Qumber, Waseem Ishaque, and Saqib Riaz, "Security Dilemma in South Asian Context," *South Asian Studies*, vol. 33, no 1 (2018), pp. 303-313.

14 Ahmad Raza Khan, "Impediments to the Success of SAARC," *South Asian Studies*, vol. 30, no. 1 (2015), pp. 291-302.

to understand India-Pakistan relations. There are a few other theories such as deterrence theory, which is applicable to India-Pakistan relations, especially after 1998.<sup>15</sup>

By taking an eclectic approach, a variety of factors, which have been responsible for the prolonged conflict between India and Pakistan, could be brought in together to explain the source and trajectory of their conflicts as well as the failure of reconciliation so far. There could be a genuine complaint against such an eclectic approach in that it is incoherent and sometimes inconsistent. However, it is far more important to capture the reality of India-Pakistan relations than being coherent. India-Pakistan relations as mentioned earlier are complex and multilayered, and it would be appropriate that its comprehension should also not be necessarily made prisoner of any one existing theoretical framework.

### **III. Source and Trajectory of Conflict**

#### ***1. Religious Identity, Partition, and Border***

India and Pakistan emerged out of the partition of India at the eve of India's independence. Britain's colonial rule in India survived by playing through various fault-lines in Indian society and one such fault-line was religion. It is said that British rule followed a policy of 'divide and rule' in the process; they tried to juxtapose the two largest religious groups in India—Hindu and Muslim. Through the actions of various governments of India, Britain re-imposed religious distinctiveness between the Hindu and Muslim population of India. Soon, a theory of two-nations was propagated which essentially meant that Hindu and Muslim could not live together peacefully and with dignity in one nation.<sup>16</sup> Although the leaders of the Indian National

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15 E. Sridharan, "International Relations Theory and the India-Pakistan Conflict," *India Review*, vol. 4, no. 2 (2005), pp. 103-124.

16 Frederic Grace, "Pakistan: The Resurgence of Baluch Nationalism," *Carnegie Papers*, no. 65 (January 2006), p. 9.

Congress, which was the main agent in the anti-freedom struggle, thoroughly rejected the two-nation theory, a few Hindu and Muslim political formations such as Hindu Mahasabha and Muslim League adopted and propagated the theory.<sup>17</sup> Muslim League demanded a separate country for Muslims and in spite of strong opposition from the Indian National Congress and leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Britain admitted demand of a separate country for Muslim in the form of Pakistan.

Just a few months before India's independence, a one-member Boundary Commission of Sir Radcliffe Brown was constituted to decide the border of India and Pakistan and hurriedly the partition of India was done.<sup>18</sup> The birth of India and Pakistan is thus a colonial design, which was supported by only few political groups in India. The source of conflict between India and Pakistan was fundamentally born from two concepts of nation. Whereas Pakistan was based on the idea that Muslims needed a separate country, the Indian constitution was based on the idea of secularism, which means that all the religious identities might live with peace and dignity in a liberal, democratic, and secular India. It is interesting to note that even today, India is home to more Muslims than Pakistan. Thus, the conflict between India and Pakistan is fundamentally about two ideas of nationhood.

India and Pakistan had to face large-scale violence and displacement because of partition. According to estimates, lakhs of people lost their lives through violence and displacement.<sup>19</sup> It also happened that the support for a separate country of Pakistan was largely concentrated in the central part of India, but Pakistan itself was assigned to the western and eastern parts of the Indian territories. According to one of the estimates based on district level census data, 10 to 18 million people had to migrate from India and Pakistan

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17 Anand K. Veram, *Reassessing Pakistan: Role of Two Nation Theory* (New Delhi: Lancer Publishers, 2001).

18 Joya Chatterji, *The Spoils of Partition: Bengal and India, 1947-1967* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), p. 14.

19 Vinod K. Chopra, *Partition Stories: Mapping Community, Communalism and Gender* (New Delhi: Anamika Publishers, 2009), p. 255.



between 1947 and 1951<sup>20</sup> and almost 2 million people lost their lives in the process. Before 1947 there were also several communal clashes in India between Muslims and Hindus in which many people lost their lives. Thus, the process of making Pakistan created hatred between the two communities and the memory of lost lives and displacement caused by each other which continues to this day.

Furthermore, the partition was so hastily done that it divided villages, homes, and cities into two parts, and one part was given to Pakistan and another part remained in India. It created huge suffering and disruption in community lives of India and Pakistan. For example, the Bengal province was divided into West Bengal and East Bengal. Whereas, West Bengal remained in India, East Bengal became East Pakistan. Similarly, Punjab is also divided between India and Pakistan. It is important to note that there was no clear divide among the Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim population in Punjab as per territory and it was a religiously mixed state. The division between East and West Punjab led to huge suffering for the people. The partition meant the cutting of 'road, rail communications, irrigations schemes, electric power systems and even individual landholdings.'<sup>21</sup> All these artificial processes of partition and demarcation created huge disruptions as well as a source of conflict between India and Pakistan.<sup>22</sup>

Another problematic part of the partition was that Britain stipulated that after independence the princely states of India, of which there were more than 600 in India, would be free to choose to become part of India or Pakistan along with having a third option to become an independent country.<sup>23</sup> Because of political pressure, most of the

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20 Yasmin Khan, *The Great Partition: The Making of India and Pakistan* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), pp. 128-143.

21 Prashant Bharadwaj, Asim Khwaja and Atif Mian, "The Big March: Migratory Flows after the Partition of India," *Economic and Political Weekly* (August 30, 2008) p. 39.

22 Anthony Read and David Fisher, *The Proudest Day: India's Long Road to Independence* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1997), p. 483.

23 Gowher Rizvi, *South Asia in a Changing International Order* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 1993), p. 149.

rulers of these princely states joined either India or Pakistan, but a few of them tried to remain independent. The princely state of Jammu and Kashmir (J&K) was one of them. It first tried to remain independent but when Pakistani fighters attacked J&K, the king asked for help from India and acceded to join the Indian union. It is important to note that the majority population of J&K was Muslim while the king was Hindu and since the king joined India, J&K was considered to have acceded to join India.<sup>24</sup> However, many critics and Pakistan claim that it was an invalid decision, as popular opinion was not sought before India integrated J&K into India. J&K has arguably been the central issue of conflict between India and Pakistan from then on.<sup>25</sup> There are also several other territorial disputes along with river water sharing issues between India and Pakistan, which make any reconciliation between the two countries very difficult. The issue of J&K was taken to the United Nations by India, but the issue remained unresolved.

## **2. Domestic Politics in India and Pakistan**

Another important variable in the India-Pakistan conflict is the nature of domestic politics in both countries. Even though India became a constitutionally secular country, the relationship between Hindus and Muslims within India has not been settled. In the democratic polity, political parties have used communal cards for political mobilization and to garner votes. The Indian National Congress (INC), which became a political party in independent India

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24 Ian Copland, *The Princes of India in the Endgame of Empire, 1917-1947* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997) and Istiaq Ahmed, *State, Nation and Ethnicity in Contemporary South Asia* (London & New York: Pinter, 1998), p. 99.

25 Sugata Bose, *Kashmir: Roots of Conflict, Paths to Peace* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003); Sumit Ganguly, *Conflict Unending: India-Pakistan Tensions Since 1947* (New York: Columbia University Press and Woodrow Wilson Press, 2001); Verghese Koithara, *Crafting Peace in Kashmir: Through a Realist Lens* (New Delhi: Sage Publications, 2004); and T. V. Paul, ed. *The India-Pakistan Conflict: An Enduring Rivalry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

and remained in power for several decades, adhered ideologically to secularism, but there are allegations that it pursued a policy of appeasement towards Muslims and treated them as a vote-bank. It led to resentment both by true secularists as well as the Hindu rights organizations. Hindu rights organization argued that if a separate country for Muslims was to be created, India must express itself exclusively by Hindu symbols and culture.

With the decline of INC and emergence of identity politics in India, the issue of India-Pakistan relations was seen by connecting it with the Indian Muslims. The rise of Hindu right-wing groups and political parties led to demand for a tough, uncompromising posture towards Pakistan. It led to a situation when advocating an engagement policy or soft policy towards Pakistan is branded as an anti-national position in India. Several reconciliation attempts by the Indian state and civil society such as an initiative called Aman ki Asha (Hope for Peace) has been ridiculed by right-leaning groups in India.<sup>26</sup>

Similarly, Pakistani domestic politics failed in its democratic experiment and in the last seventy years, it has been ruled by military dictators such as Ayub Khan, Yahya Khan, Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq, and Parvez Musharraf for a long period of time.<sup>27</sup> There have been several long phases of political instability, which has led to economic backwardness in Pakistan. The ruling elites (both civilian and military) find it easier to blame India for all their failures and mismanagement. Sometimes to divert attention from their failure and consolidate and prolong their rule, they unduly raise the issue of India. It led to the slim possibility of reconciliation between the two countries. It cannot be just a coincidence that out of the four battles between India and Pakistan, three happened while authoritarian rulers

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26 Aman M. Hingorani, *Unraveling the Kashmir Knot* (New Delhi: Sage Publication, 2016), p. 157 and Victoria Schofield, *Kashmir in Conflict: India, Pakistan and the Unending War* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 2003).

27 It is a campaign jointly started by two leading media houses, The Jang Group of Pakistan and the Times of India Group in India. The campaign aims for mutual peace and the development of diplomatic and cultural relations between the two nations in South Asia. It was established on January 1, 2010.

were in power in Pakistan.

It is also alleged that India was the main architect of dividing Pakistan and Bangladesh in 1971. Actually, Pakistan argues that India tried to prove that the religious basis for the making of a state is invalid. When the eastern part of Pakistan became a different country, separate from the western part, though both the parts had predominantly Muslim population, India could have claimed that the idea of a two-nation theory was incorrect.<sup>28</sup> Pakistan alleges that India instigated, supported, and helped separatists in Eastern Pakistan, which resulted in the division of Pakistan. However, India says that there was already discontent in the eastern part of Pakistan because of a lack of sufficient representation in Pakistan's government along with a sense of exploitation and humiliation among the people of eastern Pakistan. In such a context, the movement to create the new state of Bangladesh took birth spontaneously, and India had no role in it. When Pakistan tried to clamp down on these voices, the movement for a separate country became stronger. As per India, when millions of refugees from Bangladesh started moving to India, India had no choice but to take part in the developments in the neighborhood.<sup>29</sup> Whatever the precise course of events was, the making of Bangladesh remains important in the domestic politics of both India and Pakistan even today.

### **3. Pakistan's Quest of Symmetry- U.S. Alliance, Proximity with China, State Sponsored Terrorism, and Nuclear Weapons**

Indian is two and a half time bigger than Pakistan in terms of land

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28 M.V. Naidu, "Models of Conflict-Generation and Conflict-Resolution: India and Pakistan as Case Studies," *Peace Research*, vol. 33, no. 1 (May, 2001), p. 15.

29 Ayesha Jalal, *The Sole Spokesman: Jinnah, The Muslim League and the Demand for Pakistan* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1985), p. 262; Hussain Haqqani, "Pakistan's Endgame in Kashmir," *India Review*, vol. 2, no. 3 (July, 2003), pp. 34-54; George Tanham, "Indian Strategic Culture," *Washington Quarterly*, vol. 15, no. 1 (Winter, 1992), pp. 129-42; Stephen P. Cohen, "India, Pakistan and Kashmir," *Journal of Strategic Studies*, vol. 25, no. 4 (December, 2002).

mass and almost seven times bigger in terms of population. At present, India's GDP is almost ten times bigger than Pakistan and India's defense expenditure is almost six times that of Pakistan. The asymmetry has been there from the very beginning, though it has further widened in recent decades. In the given structural constraints, from the very beginning, Pakistan has aspired to compete with India through using various means. Pakistan tried to overcome its asymmetry of power through aligning itself with the U.S. in its initial years and became a member of the Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO).<sup>30</sup> Pakistan received important financial and technical aid from the U.S., largely unaffected by several non-democratic leaders in Pakistan. The U.S. considered its relations with Pakistan important in the context of its contest with the Soviet Union during the Cold War era. More importantly, in the late 1970s, when Afghanistan became the hotbed of conflict between the U.S. and Soviet Union, the strategic importance of Pakistan was underlined by the U.S.

Contrary to Pakistan, India from its very inception aspired to have independence in its foreign policy-making and adopted the policy of non-alignment. India was not in favor of joining a bipolar rivalry between the two superpowers and rather wanted to create a neutral space which it considered important for all the newly independent countries of the third world. India and Pakistan's conflict in this period was also expressed in their different outlooks for global politics.

In the post-Cold War era, Pakistan's relations with the U.S. gradually got strained and India's relations with the U.S. started improving. After September 11, 2001, the issue of terrorism became important in the foreign policy discourse of the U.S. The U.S. realized that terrorism is indeed a pressing issue, and it must be dealt with strongly. Although, to deal with Al Qaeda, the U.S. took support from Pakistan, but the U.S. could not shut its eyes to the terrorism emanating from Pakistan's soil, which destabilized the region.<sup>31</sup> Even

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30 Srinath Raghavan, *1971: A Global History of the Creation of Bangladesh* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2013), p. 176.

31 Eric H. Arnett, ed., *Military Capacity and the Risk of War: China, India, Pakistan*

though there could be a debate about how far the U.S. has drifted away from Pakistan in recent decades, it is undeniable that their bilateral relations have not been as close as they used to be in the Cold War days. Furthermore, India has forged multilayered comprehensive relations with the U.S., which has increasingly got strengthened. Furthermore, in the context of China's rise, which appears to be revising the international relations of the Asia-Pacific, the U.S. considers India as one of its key allies in dealing with China.<sup>32</sup> India is part of a quadrilateral network along with the U.S., Japan, and Australia, which has postulated an Indo-Pacific Strategy and Pakistan's sense of being left out has further deepened.

When Pakistan realized that the proximity between India and the U.S. had been increasing seamlessly, it tried to balance India by focusing on its friendship with China. In last few decades China and Pakistan have been cooperating in multiple areas. China played an important role in the nuclear program of Pakistan. In 1986, Pakistan and China signed an agreement on the cooperation in the field of nuclear energy, and China handed over the technology of producing a nuclear warhead (its yield was 25 kilotons) to Pakistan. In recent years, both countries have also been cooperating in China's Belt and Road Initiative (BRI). One of the strands of BRI is the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), and China has been in the process of investing around \$60 billion in Pakistan. Pakistan has also provided the Gawadar port to China. India feels that these activities are meant to encircle it.<sup>33</sup> In response, India has also acquired the Chabahar port in Iran, which is a matter of discomfort for Pakistan. Given the long-standing rivalry of India and China, New Delhi has been quite upset with growing Pakistan-China relations. India and China fought a war

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*and Iran* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1997), p. 150.

32 Shubhangi Pandey, "US Sanctions on Pakistan and Their Failure as Strategic Deterrent," *ORF Issue Brief*, Issue 251 (August 2018), p. 2.

33 Vladislav Gulevich, "India and the Indo-Pacific: Challenges and Near-Future Agenda," *Modern Diplomacy*, February 6, 2019, <<https://moderndiplomacy.eu/2019/02/06/india-and-the-indo-pacific-challenges-and-near-future-agenda/>> (date accessed October 12, 2019).

in 1962, and India claims that part of its territory is illegitimately occupied by China. India has also been unhappy as part of the CPEC passes through an Indian territory. India also complains that China has provided various important arms, ammunitions, missiles, and even nuclear technologies to Pakistan to encircle India on both sides.

Along with its increasing closeness with China, Pakistan has also tried to bridge the gap in the conventional weapons capacity vis-à-vis India by pursuing a two-pronged strategy. First, it tried to compensate with a proxy war and, secondly, by working on its nuclear weaponization program. During the Muhammad Zia-ul-Haq period, there were reports that Pakistan started supporting by various means subversive activities in India. Various discontents in India were supported by Pakistan to 'bleed India from inside.'<sup>34</sup> There have been several separatist movements in India where the role of Pakistan was proven. Pakistan provided these disgruntled groups with finance as well as arms to fight against the Indian state. Pakistan's support of separatist movements has caused huge damage to Indian human and other resources. It led to popular anger in India against Pakistan, and it has been reflected in India's mistrust towards any peace and reconciliation attempts by Pakistan.

Pakistan also spent its important technological, diplomatic, and financial resources in developing nuclear weapons. After 1971, the gap between India and Pakistan's defense capabilities in conventional arms started growing. Gradually, India's defense expenditure, which was just two times that of Pakistan in 1971 has gone up to six times at present. India's growing military power has increased its security threat to Pakistan.<sup>35</sup> India's nuclear weapons program also further

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34 Alok Ranjan, "The China-Pakistan Economic Corridor: India's Option," *Institute of Chinese Studies Occasional Paper*, no. 10 (May 2015).

35 Scott Gate and Kaushik Roy, *Unconventional Warfare in South Asia: Shadow Warriors and Counterinsurgency* (London: Routledge, 2016), Chapter 4. Also see, Srinii Sitaraman, "South Asia: Conflict, Hegemony and Power Balancing," in Kristen P. Williams, Steven E. Lobell, Neal G. Jesse (eds.), *Beyond Great Powers and Hegemons: Why Secondary States Support, Follow, or Challenge* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2012), p. 181.



heightened Pakistan's security concerns and it decided to go nuclear as well. Finally, along with India, Pakistan also tested its nuclear weapons in 1998. Through nuclear weapons, Pakistan seeks to have parity with India. For the same reason, even though the Indian nuclear doctrine talks about 'no-first-use,' Pakistan does not accept any such self-restraint.<sup>36</sup>

India also alleges that Pakistan actively supports terrorist activities in India. Indian claims might be exaggerated but at least there is enough evidence that Pakistan has been soft on lots of terrorist leaders and organizations, which have perpetrated many terrorist activities and created huge damage in India. India has suffered a lot due to such terrorist acts. There are cases such as the 1990s Punjab problem, 1993 Bombay serial blasts, 2000 Red-Fort attack, 2003 Mumbai bombing, 2005 and 2008 Delhi serial bombings, 2006 Mumbai train bombing, 2008 Mumbai attacks, January 2016 Pathankot Air Force Stations attack, September 2016 Uri Attack, and February 2019 Pulwama Attacks.

Pakistan has been trying to take some actions against the terrorist groups who were involved in those attacks, but India claims that Pakistan has not been doing 'enough.' India assumes that Pakistan has been using terrorism as a tool of state policy and any reconciliation attempt amidst the continuation of such policy could not be reliable and worth reciprocity. Both countries keep arguing about the issue of terrorism but at the same time, it must also be noted that Pakistan, too, has been a victim of terrorism. It is said that Pakistan, being a victim of terrorism, has the incapacity to deal with it. However, the point is not being appreciated enough in India and a blame game continues.

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36 R.W. Jones, "Conventional Military Imbalance and Strategic Stability in South Asia," *South Asia Strategic Stability Unit (SASSU)*, Research Paper, no. 1 (2005), pp.1-48.



## **IV. Attempts of Reconciliation:**

### **1. UN Resolution on the Issue of J&K**

Reconciliation between India and Pakistan first began when the issue of J&K went to the United Nations. The UN Security Council passed resolutions 47 on April 21, 1948 and set up the United Nations Commission for India and Pakistan (UNCIP). The resolution asked for an immediate ceasefire and called on Pakistan to withdraw from J&K and asked India to have minimum forces in J&K. The UN also asked for a plebiscite in J&K and, because of it, a ceasefire finally happened between the two countries.<sup>37</sup> In the resolution it was also directed that there would be a plebiscite in J&K to find out whether people wished to be part of India or Pakistan. However, for any plebiscite to happen, both countries had to remove their troops from the respective zones of control. Pakistan still raises the issue of plebiscite in J&K and responds by saying that India did not withdraw its soldiers from Pakistan-controlled J&K and thus the issue of a plebiscite has become irrelevant. Furthermore, India claims that there have been periodic elections in J&K and popular participation in these elections are symbolic of the fact that they want to live within the Indian union. India also claims that J&K formulated its own constitution, which came into effect in 1957 and it means that J&K has legally and constitutionally become a part of India. Actually, the UN has not been a successful platform to have reconciliation between India and Pakistan so far. At the United Nations General Assembly, both countries express their grievances against each other regularly and such acts further sharpen the conflict between them rather than pacifying them.

### **2. Tashkent Agreement**

After the 1965 India-Pakistan war, both countries had the Tashkent

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37 J. Lamont and F. Bokhari, "Pakistan in Trade and Arms Offer to India," *Financial Times*, November 24, 2008, <<https://www.ft.com/content/e2005010-b9ab-11dd-99dc-0000779fd18c>> (date accessed October 13, 2019).

Agreement, which was signed with the mediation of the Soviet Union. The agreement demanded from both countries to pull back to their pre-conflict positions and not to interfere in each other's internal affairs. It was also decided that both countries would restore economic and diplomatic relations as soon as possible.<sup>38</sup> The agreement had to face lots of challenges from the very beginning, as the Indian Prime Minister mysteriously died after the Agreement, and India was unhappy that Pakistan was not forced to cease its guerrilla warfare against India. It is also important to understand that the Tashkent Agreement was largely a peace agreement in the context of the 1965 India-Pakistan War and even though it was expected that such an initiative would make both countries further devise a peace mechanism, the process became just a one-time meeting between the two countries.

### **3. Shimla Agreement**

After the next India-Pakistan War, the Shimla Agreement was signed by India and Pakistan in July 1972. An important achievement of the Agreement was that the ceasefire line between the two countries was designated as a 'Line of Control' and it is still known by the same name. Both countries agreed that none of them would try to alter it unilaterally. It led to the demand from India that now the UN Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan was redundant and must be abandoned, though Pakistan did not agree with it. Through the Agreement, both countries also agreed that in the future all bilateral disputes between them must be settled by diplomatic means only, and Pakistan must also diplomatically recognize Bangladesh.<sup>39</sup>

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38 Shabir Choudhry, *Kashmir Dispute, Pakistan and the UN Resolutions* (Bloomington: Author House, 2017); Farzana Shakoor, "UN and Kashmir," *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 51, no. 2 (1998), pp. 53-69; For contemporary commentary see, Tarakanth Das, "The Kashmir Issue and the United Nations," *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 65, no. 2 (1950), pp. 264-282.

39 D. C. Jha, "Indo-Pakistan Relations since the Tashkent Declaration," *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 32, no. 4 (1971), pp. 502-521; Mukhtar

After the Shimla Agreement in 1978, Pakistan proposed to limit its nuclear race between themselves and India and also to establish South Asia Nuclear Weapons Free Zone (SANWFZ), but India gave a cold response and the talks never actually began.<sup>40</sup> After ten years, in 1988, India and Pakistan signed the Non-Nuclear Aggression Agreement (NNAA) treaty. But it had no effective influence in the nuclear race between India and Pakistan.

#### **4. Lahore Declaration**

Before the Kargil war, a declaration was signed between India and Pakistan in February 1999, which was called the Lahore Declaration. It was basically an extension of the NNAA in the context of both the countries becoming nuclear weapon powers. Through the Declaration, both countries agreed to avoid accidental and unauthorized operational use of the nuclear weapons along with their commitment to peace, stability, and mutual progress. Both countries also agreed to provide advance notification to each other about their ballistic missile tests as well as nuclear tests. The Declaration was one of the few reconciliation attempts, which was recognized by both in India and Pakistan. However, in May 1999, the Kargil War started between the two countries and relations again became sour. All the confidence-building measures (CBMs), which were planned between the two countries, became irrelevant. In 2001, again a summit meeting was arranged between the leaders of India and Pakistan, which occurred in Agra and which led to both countries extending their bans on nuclear tests as well as agreeing to set up a hotline between their foreign secretaries. After 2004, both countries had several CBMs, which included high-level talks and establishing India-Pakistan bus services. However, after the Mumbai attack in November 2008, the process got discontinued. There have been several other attempts by both countries to reach out

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Zaman, "Thoughts on Indo-Pakistan Relations in the Tashkent Era," *Pakistan Horizon*, vol. 22, no. 2 (1969), pp. 127-134.

40 P. R. Chari and Pervaiz Iqbal Cheema, *The Simla Agreement 1972: Its Wasted Promise* (New Delhi: Manohar Publishers, 2001).

to each other but due to a multiplicity of spoilers, the process has been ineffective.

Apart from state to state attempts, there have been several Track Two initiatives between India and Pakistan to improve their bilateral relations. One of the most prominent Track Two initiative was the Neemaran dialogue which was organized by the United States Information Services (USIS) in 1990. Later on, American foundations and German nongovernmental organizations also joined it. In October 1991, the first meeting to hold dialogues happened in India. Retired diplomats, military personnel, media persons, NGO workers, and academicians joined the dialogue. In subsequent years, many such initiatives such as the Chaophraya Dialogue, the WISCOMP annual workshop, the Pugwash Conferences, and Ottawa Dialogue were organized to achieve reconciliation between India and Pakistan. As per one study, there are around 12 Track Two groups, as well as over 20 other people-to-people exchange programs operating between India and Pakistan.<sup>41</sup> However, these attempts at reconciliation have not been able to bring any substantial change in the India-Pakistan rivalry. Critiques of these Track Two process point out that most of these dialogues are sponsored and initiated by western countries and they do not have enough domestic support either in India or in Pakistan. Furthermore, retired officials of both India and Pakistan who are the main participants in these dialogues tend to take their official positions, and they have not been flexible enough to make compromises.<sup>42</sup>

Another issue with the Track Two reconciliatory efforts is that they have not been able to decide whether they should focus to resolve the conflict or to manage the conflict. The first goal appears to be maximalist and the second one insufficient. Furthermore, the Track Two processes do not have enough resonance with the popular political moods in India and Pakistan and, ultimately, the governments

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41 Devin T. Hagerty, ed., *South Asia in World Politics* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield Publishers, 2005). p. 167.

42 Samir Ahmad, *India-Pakistan Relations: Role of Track Two Process Since 1990* (PhD diss., Kashmir University, 2014).

in both India and Pakistan hardly give any ear to their efforts or resolutions. Unlike formal Track Two initiatives, there have been sporadic civil society exchanges between India and Pakistan that have created some hope. But because of persistent events of terrorism and border clashes, these efforts have also been difficult to sustain. In fact, the importance of these non-state attempts of reconciliations between India and Pakistan cannot be overlooked as they have been helpful in several critical junctures. For example, around the time of the Kargil War in 1999, when official channels of communications ceased to exist, these non-state communications prevented the situations to exacerbate further.<sup>43</sup> Even after the 2008 Mumbai terror attacks, such channels helped both countries to find out ways to normalize their relations again.

## **V. Spoilers of India-Pakistan Reconciliation**

India and Pakistan share a complex relationship, which has, after more than 70 years, still remained unchanged. In the previous sections, a brief description of the complexities as well as an attempt to reconcile has been presented. There are various spoilers in the process who do not allow forward movement; the most important among them is the nature of domestic politics in both countries. Actually, given the structural constraints, it becomes difficult for any political leader of a political party in both countries to appear 'soft' to each other. It is very difficult to articulate a critical mass in both countries that supports any process of reconciliation as any concession to the other country is perceived as appeasement and a 'sell-out' in the domestic politics, and it has huge cost in the domestic politics of both countries.

The continuation of right-wing political forces in Pakistan and the rise of similar right-wing politics in India have further complicated the conflict between the two countries. Both countries have been sensitive or over-sensitive about their claims to J&K and in all possible bilateral

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43 Shantanu Chakrabarti, "The Relevance of Track II Diplomacy in South Asia," *International Studies*, vol. 40, no. 3 (2003), pp. 265-276.

and multilateral platforms, and both of them try to make their points. It is unfortunate but interesting to see media coverage in both countries about their disagreements on the J&K issue. For the same reason, the most important regional organization, South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), has been ineffective, ever since its inception in 1985.<sup>44</sup>

Another important spoiler in India-Pakistan relations has been vested interests such as terrorist groups and their networks. Reportedly, whenever CBMs have been started by the leaders of both countries, these groups become uncomfortable, and they resorted to some terrorist activities and derail the process. When the current Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in 2014, he wanted to explore the possibilities of reconciliation with Pakistan. To work for this, Indian and Pakistan Foreign Secretaries had a few secret meetings in third-party countries. There were also speculations that both countries were trying to reach out through mediators from the business community. Indian Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a surprise stop over journey to Pakistan to attend a private function of the Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif. However, spoilers attacked the Pathankot Airbase of India and the process could not take off.<sup>45</sup> There have been two other attacks at Uri and Pulwama supposedly conducted with Pakistan's support, and the relations have become more strained between the two countries.<sup>46</sup> In response to these terrorist attacks in India, a surgical strike and an air-strike have been conducted by India, and the tension between the two countries has become more intense.

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44 Balraj Puri, "Lessons of Kargil," *Economic and Political Weekly*, vol. 36, no. 51 (2001), pp. 4715-4717.

45 Rohitashwa Dubey, "Indophobia as the Ailment of SAARC," *The Indian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 49, no. 1 (1988), pp. 71-82; A Majid, "India-Pakistan Rivalry Hampering the SAARC to Become a Worthwhile Forum," *Journal of the Research Society of Pakistan*, vol. 54, no. 2 (2017), pp. 1-15.

46 "Terrorists Storm Air Force Base, First Challenge to Modi's Pak Outreach," *The Hindu*, January 2, 2016, <<https://www.thehindu.com/news/national/other-states/Terrorists-storm-air-force-base-first-challenge-to-Modi%E2%80%99s-Pak-outreach/article13976989.ece>> (date accessed October 12, 2019).

In August 2019, India passed a resolution in its parliament, which diluted article 370 of the Indian constitution that provided special status to J&K. Pakistan has been very upset by India's action, and it has tried to raise the issue in a possible forum. There have been almost daily exchanges of rhetoric between the leaders of both countries as well as the defense establishment, including the threat of use of nuclear weapons in any future armed conflict between the two countries. Recently, Indian Defense Minister Rajnath Singh stated that India would not be bound by its self-proclaimed principle of 'no first use,' and it might decide its response as per its strategic requirements.<sup>47</sup>

Another important variable as per India is the lack of clarity in Pakistan about which institution is having a final say in the decision-making of Pakistan. India claims that there are at least three power centers in Pakistan, namely, the government, the army, and terrorist groups and generally there is no certainty that any one of them is in full control of the situation.<sup>48</sup> India suggests that Pakistan's government must restore order in its decision-making so that India could have talks and on the basis of quid pro quo could have some deal. For the same reason, India keeps repeating its demand that until Pakistan stops cross-border terrorist activities in India, New Delhi will not have talks with Islamabad. India also insists that important terrorist leaders, who are staying in Pakistan territories, must also be punished as a symbol of Pakistan's sincerity to have reconciliation with India. Pakistan on the other hand also alleges that India has been supporting subversive activities in some areas of Pakistan such as Baluchistan and it must be stopped before any process of rapprochement between the two countries begins.

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47 "Was Chowkidar Sleeping When Uri, Pathankor, Pulwama Happened, Asks Kapil Sibal," *Outlook India*, March 24, 2019, <<https://www.outlookindia.com/website/story/india-news-was-chowkidar-sleeping-when-uri-pathankot-pulwama-happened-asks-kapil-sibal/327495>> (date accessed October 12, 2019).

48 "No First Use Nuclear Policy May Change in Future, Says Rajnath Singh on India's Defense Strategy," *India Today*, August 16, 2019, <<https://www.indiatoday.in/india/story/india-no-first-use-nuclear-policy-may-change-rajnath-singh-1581403-2019-08-16>> (date accessed October 12, 2019).

To name another spoiler in the process, a lack of sufficient economic development could also be cited. Both countries but more so Pakistan have been less successful in bringing sufficient welfare to their people, and it has been said that to divert attention from their failure, the leaderships in both countries have resorted to creating an 'external culprit' in each other.<sup>49</sup> The role of each other in their own failure to provide welfare is trivialized in the domestic politics of both countries up to an absurd level, and it has created a popular myth in both countries that they are each other's number one enemy.

## VI. Conclusion

Overall, India and Pakistan are divided countries which have multiple layers to their conflicts, from cultural to historical, political to strategic, domestic politics to international equations, and security to national pride. Thus, the military clashes between these two countries, as manifestations of their conflicts, have been in abundance both in qualitative and quantitative terms. The issue has been so intractable that even though there have been multiple attempts from both sides to reconcile with each other, most of them have been ineffective.

The interplay of the international and domestic variables has also made it impossible for a reconciliation attempt to succeed. The political cost of reconciliation for any leader in both India and Pakistan is so high that they don't want to take a risk and look 'weak.' Even though at civil society level, there have been various exchanges between the two countries, these exchanges have not been able to bring any change in the inter-state relations between them. Problem is that the bilateral conflicts between India and Pakistan have strong connection with domestic players in both India and Pakistan, and that irrespective to the behavior of the other parties, India and Pakistan decided to compete with each other as per their own domestic political imperatives.

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49 Husain Haqqani, *Pakistan: Between Mosque and Military* (Washington D.C.: Brooking Institution Press, 2010).



In recent years, the conflict between India and Pakistan has flared up further and both countries have been flexing their muscles. There are Indian reports that Pakistan has violated the ceasefire more than 2,000 times in the first eight months of 2019. Similarly, Pakistan has also reported various violations by Indian troops. In such a scenario, while looking at the state of conflicts and reconciliation between India, it is almost impossible to be anything except pessimistic.

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