

India-Pakistan: Contours of Relationships

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Abstract

Even after about 70 years of separation, India and Pakistan continue to live in the prison of the past. The rhetoric of partition is still alive in the memory of the people of both the countries. They have constructed fixed, unchanging and competing images for each other. While Pakistan became an Islamic Republic, India adopted secularism, thereby, negating the two-nation theory. The 'differences' along with memories of partition has made Indian and Pakistani to remain in permanent hostile situation. The leaders of the two countries try to settle their disputes but fails because of lack of support from their social and political institutions. Since its coming into power in 2014, the NDA government under the Indian Prime Minister, Mr. Narendra Modi has managed to engage the Pakistani establishment, despite many problems between the two countries. This article tries to highlight upon the contours of relationships post-2014.

Key words: Balochistan, Bharatya Janata Party (BJP), ISI, Partition, RAW, Pathankot, India, Pakistan

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Introduction

In 1947, as a result of the partition of British India, India and Pakistan came into existence as two sovereign countries. The demand for partition was made on the basis of religion. The slogan of 'two nation' theory was raised by Sir Syed Ahmed Khan and found equal support from V. D. Savarkar (Savarkar, 1949). According to the 'two nation' theory, the Hindus and Muslims were considered two groups having many differences, so they cannot live together. In 1947, this assumption along with many other factors like British policy of divide-and-rule, power struggle among individuals and groups, etc. became reason for the partition of the British India. Since then India-Pakistan relationship is in flux, and has witnessed more bitterness than cooperation. They have engaged into three full wars (1948, 1965 and 1971), one limited war (1999), and witnessed series of militarily tensed situations (1987, 1990, 2002 and 2008). The military competition between them has led them to overtly carry out nuclear test in 1998, which has made the situation militarily dangerous. There have been also instances of cooperation like the two countries had signed Indus Water Treaty in 1960; in 1965 they resolved their western border issue in Kutch (Gujarat),¹ and in 1988 they signed an agreement to exchange their nuclear lists (Singh, 2001). The first two happened because of mediation and arbitration while the later was bilateral decision.

In this paper, we make an attempt to discuss the developments in relationship between the two countries after May 2014, when the National Democratic Alliance (NDA) led by Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) under the Prime Minister Mr. Narendra Modi came into power. This is significant because soon after winning the elections, the Indian Prime Minister invited the leaders of the South Asian countries and Mauritius to be a part of his swearing-in ceremony. He came out with a slogan

'neighbours first' policy. As this paper deals with the developments after 2014, it depends more on the newspaper reports, press clippings and opinion pieces. Here, we argue that despite recent incidents, India and Pakistan continue with their talks, instead severing all links. This has been possible because of political leaderships of the two states who, until now, have expressed willingness to remain engaged with one another at different institutional levels.

Initial Steps

Since the political situation of the country affects the relations between the two countries, BJP's coming to power in 2014 raised apprehensions not only within India but also across the border. BJP explicitly regards itself as a Hindu majoritarian party. On foreign policy front, while in opposition, like all major opposition parties in India, it too supported 'aggressive nationalism', especially in relation with Pakistan and China. Before coming to power, it had vehemently criticised the ruling United Progressive Alliance (UPA) government for being passive and ineffective on the front of Indo-Pak relations and had opposed their Pakistan policy (Modi Slams Manmohan Singh over LoC attack, 2013). Like in the past, Pakistan was an agenda in the election campaigning. The PM candidate of the BJP had promised to give Pakistan a "befitting" reply. Those who differ from the BJP's agenda were scornfully mentioned by party activists as 'agents of Pakistan' who should be thrown away from India. During the general election, BJP leader Giriraj Singh made a statement that Modi's critics will have to live in Pakistan and not in India (Ahmad 2014).

However, once in power, *realpolitik*² and established norms *regulates* their behaviour. The Indian Prime Minister invited the political heads of South Asian countries in his swearing in ceremony. While it was largely welcomed

¹ The World Bank assisted in signing of the Indus Water Treaty in 1960, which was signed after eight years of negotiations. The Kutch border dispute was settled through arbitration tribunal in 1965 (see, Bajwa, 2014)

² It means real or practical approach towards an issue. Many times the political leaders make chauvinist statements just to garner votes in election but when they come into power they follow the established norms.

and all the leaders had come, this move was put to great analysis. It was pointed out that this was a clear indication that India wished to play an active role in South Asian politics. Whether it will be for the progress of South Asia as a region or will be an extension of the 'big brother'³ status of India will be revealed with time. The first foreign visit by the Indian Prime Minister to Bhutan and his assertive step to implement the Land Boundary Agreement⁴ with Bangladesh set up a new chapter in India's foreign policy, which was welcomed even by his detractors.

Yet, the leadership remained clueless about its relationship with Pakistan. In the beginning of the NDA government, the relationship was tensed over the issue of a meeting of Pakistani representatives with Kashmiri separatists' leaders in August 2014. The new government of India was against any such meeting, as a result, the foreign secretary level talks de-railed. After swearing-in ceremony the first meeting between the two Prime Ministers was held in Kathmandu during the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) meeting in 2014. There they discussed the issues in a hotel room, booked in the name of an Indian businessperson (Dutt, 2016). This method has been used by many political leaders to break an ice between them. It seems that at that time the two leaders sketched out a process of their engagements. Later on, in 2015, at Russian city Ufa during Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO) multilateral forum, the Indian and Pakistani Prime Ministers came out with a

Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), which called for carrying out talks. Both sides interpreted the MoU in their own way. For India, the talk was limited to terrorism while for Pakistan; it was for inclusion of all bilateral issues. Sartaz Aziz, Pakistan's foreign policy adviser came to India but talks could not take place because no side wanted to relegate from its position.

In-between such meetings and promises to improve the relationships, there have been frequent and intense border clashes wherein both sides claim "unprovoked firing" and assert victimhood. In 2015, there were terrorist attacks in Gurdaspur (Sehgal, 2015) and Udhampur (Singh, 2015) for which India had accused Pakistan. Similarly, there have been many terrorist attacks in Pakistan and likewise, Pakistan has accused India of funding the terrorists and these attacks. To take stock of the situation due to increase in terrorist activities, the Indian and Pakistani National Security Advisers (NSA) met in Bangkok in December 2015. The two NSA's called the talks 'constructive' and mentioned that the negotiation process will continue (Haider, 2015a), other developments kept on challenging their bilateral relationship. The Pakistani leadership has also raised the issue of Kashmir in the United Nations and in the Organization of Islamic State (OIC) meetings.

Diplomatic visits remain as usual, and one of the most notable ones being what is regarded as the spontaneous visit of Modi to Lahore while coming back from his visit to Afghanistan. It was reported that on 25th December, which is Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif's birthday, Mr. Modi called Mr. Sharif to wish and was in turn invited by Sharif to his grand daughter's wedding. Modi accepted and landed in Pakistan. It was his first visit to Pakistan. This visit to Pakistan, which was the first visit of an Indian Premier after more than a decade, again took everyone by surprise. It was much welcomed and appreciated. However, the appreciation was short-lived. Just about a week later, there was a terrorist attack in Pathankot (Punjab, India). The Pathankot attack again

³ The idea of 'big brother' has been tried to be replaced by 'elder brother'. The later means a brother who also provides affection and love to his younger brother. The foreign minister of India Ms Sushma Swaraj has repeatedly used 'elder brother' instead 'big brother'. The last time she used this term was in a lecture at Indian Council of World Affairs in March 2016 when the Prime Minister of Nepal K.P. Oli visited the institute. Retrieved from: <http://www.theweek.in/news/india/india-is-nepal-elder-brother-not-big-brother-swaraj.html>

⁴ The LBA protocol was signed by the Dr. Manmohan Singh government in 2011 to which BJP was critical, but once in power the Prime Minister took step to implement it and signed the implementation in June 2015 in Dhaka (Ranjan, 2015).

halted the bilateral process. This was followed by other tragedies like the Gulshan-e-Iqbal Bomb blast in Lahore, the arrest of a 'RAW Agent'⁵ and a debate on India's interference in Balochistan. It is imperative to focus on these recent issues, understand the background, the claims of both sides to get a glimpse of the complexity that forms the Indo-Pak Conflict.

The Pathankot Attack

On the intervening nights of 1st and 2nd January 2016, six terrorists attacked the Pathankot Air Force Station, part of the Western Air Command of the Indian Air Force. The terrorists were all dressed up in Indian Army uniforms and carried with them over 50 kilograms of ammunitions. The operation was strategically planned and continued for over 72 hours. All the six terrorists were killed. The attack claimed the lives of 8 people (Baweja and Sethi, 2016). The United Jihad Council, a Kashmiri separatist militant group, issued a statement taking full responsibility for the attack. The statement read (Ashiq Peerzada was the first name), 2016):

[The] Indian government and its media have been suffering from Pakistan-phobia. By accusing Pakistan for every attack, India neither succeeded in the past to malign the Kashmir Freedom Struggle, nor will it get anything in the future through malicious propaganda. The attack on Pathankot Air Base from Kashmiri Mujhadeen carries a message to India that no security establishment and garrison are out of reach from militants. Instead of accusing Pakistan, India should read the writing on the wall and without wasting any time should provide an opportunity to the people of Kashmir to decide their future.

However, the Indian Government believes that this is not done by United Jihad Council but by another Pakistan-based group, Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM). Although the JeM did not claim responsibility, it issued a statement

praising the attack (Pakistan probe: Officials deny JeM links to Pathankot attack, 2016). The National Investigation Agency (NIA) had also found several evidence to establish Pakistan link to the attack. However, Pakistan has not accepted these claims though it has claimed co-operation in the investigation. Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif had condemned the attack and had promised help to jointly tackle terrorism (India has given fresh evidence on Pathankot attack: Pakistan PM Nawaz Sharif, 2016). Pakistan had made a special investigative team to probe into the Pathankot attack. The investigative team ruled out the involvement of Jaish-e-Mohammed (Pak Clears of Masood's hand in Pathankot 2016). Although, Pakistan had arrested Jaish-e-Mohammad chief Maulana Masood Azhar, his brother and several individuals belonging to outfit, their office was also sealed for checking. However, Pakistan denied getting any evidence to prove that Jaish-e-Mohammad was involved in the Pathankot Attack.

Pakistan also appointed a Joint Investigative Team (JIT) that visited India to collect evidence. The probe team comprised of Punjab Counter Terrorism Department (CTD) Additional Inspector General of Police (IGP) Muhammad Tahir Rai (convener), Lahore Deputy Director General (DDG) Intelligence Bureau Mohammad Azim Arshad, Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI) Lt Col Tanvir Ahmed, Military Intelligence Lt Col Irfan Mirza and Gujjaranwala CTD Investigating Officer Shahid Tanveer (Pak forms new team to probe Pathankot attacks, 2016). Despite evidence, the JIT alleged that the attack was 'staged – managed' by India and that Pakistan had nothing to do with the incident. An unnamed JIT member remarked:

The attack was nothing but "vicious propaganda" against Pakistan, as Indian authorities did not have any evidence to back their claims. Within hours of the assault, all the attackers were shot dead by the Indian security forces. However, the Indian authorities made it a three-day drama to get maximum attention from the world

⁵ Research and Analysis Wing (RAW) is India's spy agency.

community in order to malign Pakistan (India rubbishes Pakistan media report on Pathankot terror attack, 2016).

While India claimed that it had provided JIT with all the information, JIT claimed that India had not given them full access. They were denied access to the witnesses who belonged to the security forces.

The Pathankot incident, the way the attack and the counter-operation were executed has been highly debated even within India. Several loopholes in the strategy, the way the intelligence and security officials worked, have been pointed out. Asit Jolly and Sandip Unnithan (2016) raised some questions on the negligence by the security personnel, delayed response even when Superintendent of Police of Pathankot claimed to have been kidnapped by terrorists, operation being called off without checking whether all terrorists have been killed even when one witness claimed that there were 5 terrorists and only 4 were found by the security agencies, lack of co-ordination, deployment of National Security Guards to protect the airbase.

However, Dr. Rajeshwar Singh (2016), Deputy Director of Directorate of Enforcement, responded to several “unanswered questions”, some of which were also those asked by Jolly and Unnithan (2016). Singh (2016) goes on to challenge the claim that there was a lack of co-ordination. He also highlighted the difficulties, the element of shock and challenges on the ground situation. He further discussed on the role that the media plays. In doing so, he talked about how the media tends to exaggerate and report facts without confirming. While he addressed the questions related to counter-terrorist strategy, he did not talk about the questions that pertain to the entry and the negligence shown by the intelligence and security agency before the attack.

Kadayam Subramaniam (2016), a former Director of the Research and Policy Division of the Indian Ministry of Home Affairs and a Director General of Police in Northeast India, argued:

The Indian state of Punjab bordering Pakistan has witnessed Sikh terrorism and falls on the global routes of drugs and arms trafficking from Afghanistan via Pakistan. Indian police and paramilitary personnel deployed along these routes are suspected to be involved in these activities. Whether the terrorists who attacked the Pathankot airbase were from Pakistan would need detailed examination. The role of the serving superintendent of police, who was conveniently kidnapped by the terrorists and then released unharmed, is dubious and calls for deeper probe. (Subramaniam 2016, no page number)

Subramaniam (2016) asserted that the Indian version of the Pathankot terrorist attack contains many loopholes is corroborated by the report of the Parliamentary Standing Committee on the Ministry of Home Affairs that noted several lapses on the part of the Indian security forces and the government.

The point on the nexus between drug dealers and police was also raised by Dr. Rajeshwar Singh (2016). He said:

The ease with which the Fidayeen could move in Pathankot and commandeer the vehicle of the district superintendent of police also speaks volumes of the collusion and deep-rooted criminal nexus between drug smugglers and the Pathankot police. (Singh, 2016: no page number)

The JIT’s clear denial of Pakistan’s involvement led to a severe criticism of the Modi Government—*The Times of India* quoted, Anand Sharma from Congress who said: “[w]e had questioned the visit of the Pakistan JIT, which included representatives of the ISI. Surely, the JIT and the ISI would not have indicted themselves” (India rubbishes Pak media report, 2016).

The 'RAW Agent'

In March, Pakistani Newspapers reported that an 'Indian spy' named Kulbhushan Jadhav⁶ has been arrested from Balochistan. It was alleged that he was involved in terrorist activities in Pakistan. There has been a huge uproar after this. The Pakistani media, government and army have been actively highlighting this case. The Pakistani media published the passport of the suspect that claimed that he is from Mumbai and had a valid Iranian visa made out in the name of Hussein Mubarak Patel. They further claimed that he had joined RAW in 2013 and was initially based in Chabahar, the port in Iran, which India is helping to develop. A video was also circulated wherein it has been claimed that Jadhav had confessed to be a spy. Pakistan's Senate has also unanimously adopted a resolution asking the government to prepare a dossier on "Indian interference" in the country and send it to other nations and international institutions.

After the reports, the Indian High Commissioner Gautam Bambawale was summoned by Pakistan to protest what it claimed was the "subversive activities"⁷ of a "RAW officer." However, India rejected these claims and maintained that the arrested individual has no any links with the Government (Razdan 2016).

India had sought permission from the Pakistan Government to be allowed consular access to Jadhav but so far, the government has rejected. In response, as per media reports, their stand is that India could be granted 'restricted' consular access to Yadav only if some world powers intervened and gave certain guarantees. Pakistan has always accused India to be involved in Balochistan and interferes in the internal issues of Pakistan. The arrest of the suspected 'RAW Agent' had given an

opportunity to prove its allegations and claims about India's involvement in Pakistan's internal affairs.

In India, there have been debates on the claim of Pakistan. In his analytical article, Manoj Joshi (2016: no page number) from Observer Research Foundation has given a glimpse of both the possibilities. The first part of the article rules out the possibilities of Jadhav being a 'RAW Agent'. He argues that Jadhav was a commander-level officer, which is equivalent to a lieutenant colonel in the army while the officers who are involved in cross-border operations are generally of lower ranks (Joshi, 2016). He cites the example of the ISI agents that have been caught by India. An important question that he raised was that if he indeed were an agent who was lurking in Pakistan without visa, why would he carry an Indian Passport? A third country passport for such missions is standard practice for any major intelligence agency. This is because it provides them an immediate opportunity of denial in case they are caught (Joshi, 2016).

Joshi (2016) has also looked at the reverse side and explored the possibilities of him being an agent. He also rightfully argues that even if he is really an agent, the fact is that India will never accept this. No country accepts this. The possibility of India's probable role in the Balochistan conflict also cannot be simply dismissed. While India has never publicly backed the Baloch Separatist movement, there are interests as well as evidence for its intervention (Joshi 2016).

India and Balochistan

Balochistan is the largest province of Pakistan. It comprises of 44 per cent of the total land mass. It has a coastline of 770 km. It shares borders with Iran and Afghanistan. Balochistan is very rich in terms of resources and is therefore, economically important. It is immensely rich in minerals and gas reserves. The geostrategic importance of Balochistan is also equally important. It offers access routes to Afghanistan and Central Asia and to the seas of Indian Ocean, South Asia and Middle East (Khan, 2013: 200).

⁶ There is some confusion regarding the surname. While some reports call him Jadhav, others write Yadav.

⁷ This phrase was used in almost all major newspapers reporting on the issue. See <http://www.firstpost.com/india/eye-spy-mea-says-yadav-was-in-the-navy-but-denies-links-to-govt-as-pakistan-summons-envoy-2696034.html>.

However, Balochistan has long been a conflict zone. There has been a long-standing and widespread disillusionment and resentment among the people of Balochistan. According to Mahrukh Khan (2013), this can be attributed to the general view of people of Balochistan that “Balochistan is a part of the federation only on paper and is at the mercy of the State, which continues to exploit its natural wealth” (Khan, 2013: 200). She notes that the current tension is caused by a “growing socio-economic insecurity and resentment due to systematic discriminations and oppression by the Centre” (Khan, 2013: 200-01).

The problem of Balochistan, however, can be traced to the independence and formation of Pakistan. Qazi Shakeel Ahmad (2005) notes:

The British-administered Balochistan constituted not more than 40 per cent of the total area of the province. The remaining 60% constitutes the former states of Lasbela, Kalat, Kheran and Mekran. According to 3 June plan, these states were required to seek accession to either Pakistan or India.

To the great shock of Quaid-e-Azam Muhammed Ali Jinnah, the Khan of Kalat declared independence just a day after Pakistan emerged as an Independent country. (Ahmad, 2005: 31)

But this was not accepted by the Pakistan Government. The King of Kalat acceded to Pakistan unconditionally in March 1948. (Ahmad, 2005: 31) However, according to Mahrukh Khan (2013), the Baloch nationalism did not die out. In fact, it was intensified and is sustained by several military campaigns launched by Pakistan Army, the political chaos and oppression under different political regimes at the Centre and the growing economic disparity among the people (Khan, 2013: 206-7). Unlike the past the post-1999 mobilization in Balochistan is attributed to the economic reasons, where the Baloch nationalists feel that their resources are being exploited by the Punjab dominated Pakistani power elites (Siddiqi, 2015).

Pakistan claims that India funds militancy and violence in Balochistan to disrupt the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC), a gigantic project of road and railway networks linking China’s Xinjiang province with Gwadar port. Pakistan has accused India of interfering in the domestic affairs also to destabilize Pakistan. There is a tendency to blame India whenever there is a terror attack in Pakistan as there is a belief that terrorism in Pakistan is funded essentially by India. In this regard, in 2015, Pakistan’s permanent representative at the United Nations, Maleeha Lodhi, had handed over dossiers containing evidence of India’s involvement in Balochistan and other parts of the country (Manan, Abdul, Mohammad Zafar & Qadeer Tanoli, 2016).

Syed Fazl-e-Haider (2015b: no page number), author of *The Economic Development of Balochistan*, supports the claim of Indian intervention in Balochistan because of strategic reasons. He writes:

India’s involvement in the Balochistan unrest cannot be ruled out in view of the rapidly changing geopolitics of the region. India, which has ambitions of dominating the Arabian Sea and the Indian Ocean, is upset over China’s growing stakes in the Gwadar port. A fully-developed and functional Gwadar port near the Strait of Hormuz enables China to frustrate India’s dream of dominating regional waterways. New Delhi feels that the Gwadar port would have serious strategic implications for India. It perceives that it would empower Pakistan to control strategically important energy sea-lanes on the Persian Gulf, while India controls no choke-points on the coastline of the subcontinent through which international shipping may pass. India sees Chinese involvement in Gwadar with suspicion and believes that China wants to set up bases and outposts across the globe to monitor and safeguard energy flows.

To support his claim he has quoted the former Indian naval chief, Admiral Suresh Mehta, who had expressed concerns over the development of Gwadar port in 2008 and had said: “[b]eing only 180 nautical miles from the exit of the Straits of Hormuz, Gwadar, being built in Balochistan coast, would enable Pakistan to take control over the world energy jugular and interdiction of Indian tankers.” (Mehta as cited in Haider, 2015b: no page number) India is developing Iran’s Chabahar port as a competitor to Gwadar port. India’s stake in the Chabahar port is aimed at gaining access to land-locked Afghanistan and the Central Asian Republics, bypassing Pakistan in transit trade with Iran and other countries. Mickey Kupecz (2012) argues that third-party sources have supported the claim of India’s intervention in domestic affairs of Balochistan. He quotes Christine Fair, a Pakistan Expert, who states, “It would be a mistake to completely disregard Pakistan’s regional perceptions...Indian officials have told me privately that they are pumping money into Balochistan” (Kupecz, 2012: 106).

Manoj Joshi (2016) finds out that India has important strategic interests in Pakistan, including in the Balochistan region. According to Joshi, Balochistan is of interest principally because of the naval activities of the Chinese in Gwadar and the plans for the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor. He (Joshi, 2016) writes:

For the past two decades, India has made no secret of its activities in Iranian Balochistan. It has sought to develop the port of Chabahar for alternative routes to Afghanistan and Central Asia. It has used its consulate in Zahedan, which is near the Pakistan border, to keep an eye on Pakistani activity there and support Indian interests.

This has been re-iterated by Kanchan Gupta (2016), a political commentator from India. Gupta ruled out the possibility of a big “Indian conspiracy” in Balochistan due to what she regards as lack of political will and popular support. However, she referred to investment in the Chabahar port as “one pawn moved”.

She also supports the intervention on moral grounds.

There are many on the Indian side who may deny the allegations but recommends India’s intervention in Balochistan. While Dr. Amarjit Singh, an independent Security Analyst from India, does not say that India is already backing a separatist movement in Balochistan but argue that India should do so. In his article titled “How to succeed a proxy war in Balochistan” (Singh, 2014), he argues that like Pakistan is fanning several separatist movements in India, India should also do the same. He writes:

So, short of an invasion of Pakistan, an Indian proxy war inside Pakistan must be expanded. Whereas a proxy war by Pakistan in two Indian provinces merely affects less than 10% of all Indian provinces, a proxy war by India in two Pakistani provinces can affect 40% of Pakistan. By its sheer size, Pakistani resilience can be less, and Pakistani response to Indian proxy wars can be less effective. In addition, the effect of proxy wars on the Pakistani economy can be much more to Pakistan than a proxy war on India by Pakistan. (Singh, 2014: no page number)

There have been other instances that convey a possibility of India’s intervention in Balochistan. Indian Journalist and Representative of Pakistani newspaper *Dawn*, Jawed Naqvi, stated that there is a link and that it was publicly declared when the Balochistan Liberation Organisation (BLO), an outlawed organisation in Pakistan, representative Balaach Pardili addressed a gathering in New Delhi on October 4, 2016 reading out a statement from BLO’s exiled leader Nawabzada Hyrbyair Marri. The BLO had confirmed about the presence of its political representative in Delhi. Pardili who originally hails from Afghanistan has been living in Delhi since 2009 and was contacted by Nawabzada Marri to represent him at public meetings (Naqvi, 2015).

While India may be interfering in Balochistan, another important question to be asked is, to

what extent? Ajai Sahni (2006) argues that: while there are interests for and evidence of India's intervention in Balochistan, it has been over-hyped by Pakistan.

Beyond the see saw game, the locals (see Ahmad 2014) who faces challenges of displacement, etc. are also opposing the port. This is not only a case with the Gawadar, but all such development projects come up at the cost of livelihood of local people. One of the reasons for opposition to CPEC is that the corridor would be used to exploration and transportation of the local resources to meet the needs of 'others'. To counter resistances, Pakistan government has used both coercion and co-option (Siddiqi 2015). The Pakistan Army is notorious to use coercion without, sometimes, even knowledge of political leadership. One of the military intelligence official reportedly told an illegally detained politician "even if the president or chief justice tells us to release you, we won't. We can torture you, or kill you, or keep you for years at our will. It is only the Army chief and the intelligence chief that we obey" (As cited in Shah 2016, 50).

Larger Context

These recent conflicts, however much unfortunate, are not new and uncommon. As discussed previously, the Indo-Pak relations have always been fluctuating. Both the States continue to be at loggerheads with each other. There is a continued legacy of hatred. Both continue to compete and compare themselves to each other, proving how they are better than the other. The other continues to be seen as an aggressive enemy. This image has not just been constructed but is regularly renewed through border clashes, policies, blame game and actual attacks directly or indirectly. There is a huge trust deficit, because of which the armies in both countries are subjected to heavy investment. India's military prowess was a great matter of concern in Pakistan.

Naveed Ahmad (2015), Pakistani Investigative Journalist, analyse the military investment of India in 2015 and the resultant worry for Pakistan. He writes:

In 2015, India registered an 11% increase in military expenditure, with acquisition of the latest nuclear submarines, INS Arihant, being the highlight. The \$3 billion strategic vessel that cleared all sea trials is definitely worrisome for Pakistan as it gives Delhi assured second-strike capability in a nuclear standoff. This was followed with the purchase of 36 Rafael fighter jets from France in addition to 270 Russia-made SU-30MKIs, making the threat more real for Islamabad amid no progress in composite dialogue – renamed after Modi government as comprehensive dialogue – on dispute resolution. (Ahmad, 2015: no page number). He further validates his concern by quoting that National Security Adviser Lieutenant General (Retired) Nasir Khan Janjua had also highlighted the same in a seminar. He argue that the Retired General had clearly stated that India's soaring military expense threatens Pakistan's and the region's peace.

The war industry is not a new concept in the context of India and Pakistan. Both India and Pakistan are not only buyers but are also suppliers of arms to various countries. There is also a nexus between war, military and internal politics. While the connection between army and domestic politics is more apparent in the case of Pakistan, armies of both countries may be involved in constructing the "enemy" beyond the border for its own interests.

The recent conflicts can also be seen in the larger political context of Pakistan. The timing of the arrest of Indian spy suspect and revelation of RAW agents in Balochistan can be seen in view of the disturbance between the Civil Government and Military. There has been a growing resentment between Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif and Army Chief Raheel Sharif. Pakistani Journalist and Analyst, Najam Sethi (2016) has stated several reasons underlying this resentment that include Nawaz Sharif's apparently Pro-Indian stand, inefficient political policies, inept policy on Taliban, among other reasons.

After the Gulshan-e-Iqbal blast, the Army Chief Raheel Shareef did not seek permission from the Prime Minister to start search operations in

Punjab. He had also refused any joint action with the police while the army is responsible for the areas beyond Punjab (General Raheel denies joint action with police, 2016). The name of the family members of Nawaz Sharif in the Panama Leak case was like another nail in the coffin. Akbar Notezai (2016) notes that the recent pro-activeness of the Army on the issue of rooting corruption may be an indication that there is trouble ahead for the civilian government or atleast for Nawaz Sharif.

M Ilyas Khan (2016) also argue in the case of the Indian spy that the assertiveness by Army can be seen as a sign of the Pakistani army's growing willingness to be seen to be dictating the country's foreign and national security policies. He further argue, "[i]t comes as the army tries to face the triple threat of the Pakistani Taliban, Baloch insurgents and a complicated mix of urban crime, ethnic, linguistic, religious, sectarian and political rivalries in the country's biggest city, Karachi." (Khan, 2016: no page number)

Khan (2016) argues that it also indicates a toughening of Pakistan's position against India at a time when the Pakistani army is emerging as one of the chief guarantors of peace in Afghanistan, in partnership with China. Any failure to deliver on this score is likely to weaken Afghan President Ashraf Ghani, an apparent ally of Pakistan, and strengthen pro-India forces in Kabul.

Conclusion

The India-Pakistan relationship is such that any predication or possibility can fail. In the past, a number of times the two countries have started a structured dialogue but have failed to conclude it. Due to the nature of their bilateral relationship, many times it seems that a nuclear war can trigger but till now a rational thinking has prevented such untoward incident. One such situation was Mumbai attack in 2008. The then government under Dr. Manmohan Singh handled the situation calmly. However, the rise of neo-nationalism will keep on putting its political leadership under test; and any untoward incident may put pressure for all-out

attack, at that time, it is to watch how power elites behave.

The relationship between the two countries can be in 'workable' situation if they continue to engage in dialogue. The continuity may not always provide result, because of their relationship; it will certainly help in building certain mechanisms to 'cool off' tensions. They can be of immense help during tensed time. In this light, despite so many problems the foreign secretaries of India and Pakistan met in May 2016.

Both countries have their trouble spots due to historical and political reasons. These spots provide soft points for various actors to play their own game, which have repercussions on India-Pakistan relationships.

Finally, against the perception, the present government in India is taking positive steps to keep the two countries engaged. It is doing so despite being criticised by many, including its own party members. The surprised visit by the Indian Prime Minister may be criticised but was a positive gesture. He also made the efforts to keep the two countries on talking board despite the incidents like in Pathankot and Gurdaspur. The Pakistani political establishment too has reacted positively without falling in the lines of radical elements that are against any form of engagements with India.

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