

Cost of Conflict Between India and Pakistan*

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Cost of conflict between India and Pakistan has come at a time when there are earnest efforts underway to establish peace and harmony between the two countries, so that both can progress on the path of development instead of being mired in the bog of hatred and conflict. The research effort is both timely and significant as it provides ample data to strategic analysts and adequate incentive to planners to ensure that conflict is avoided in the future.

The book comprises eight chapters and starts with "The Context", which gives the statistical data about the heads of the Government in the past, bilateral meetings between India and Pakistan, time line of India-Pakistan relations which explains the major happenings in each decade of existence and the "Swing Model" of relations between the two countries.

Chapter One is on "Military Costs" which starts with comparative military assets and then breaks down the costs in terms of casualties in Kargil and conflict over Siachen. Costs of confrontation in 2002, during Operation Parakram are given in terms of economic costs (billions of US Dollars) and also as percentage of GDP. The logic of the possibility of a war in 2005-2007 is too simplistic to be credible. Taking the cost escalation factor to be 50 per cent of the cost incurred in 2002 and assuming a growth rate of 7 per cent and 4.5 per cent annually for India and Pakistan respectively, the costs will amount to 0.43 per cent of GDP for India and 2.25 per cent of GDP for Pakistan, should a conflict occur in 2007. Annual military expenditure from 2001-2002 to the likely expenditure of 2006-2007 reveals that while India spends substantially more on defence than Pakistan, the latter's per capita expenditure is twice that of India. Comparison between military and human development expenditures reveal the extent to which both nations could benefit if they shed their hostility and learn to live in peace. This chapter ends with a brief exposure of the cost of sponsoring terrorism in Jammu and Kashmir by the ISI of Pakistan, which amounts to approximately Rs seven to 10 billion per year. This expenditure is miniscule because it exacts very heavy economic costs on the Indian side apart from the large number of troops it manages to engage in counter-insurgency.

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Chapter Two deals with "Social and Political" costs of the conflict which, as per the document, has resulted in excessive focus on national security in India and polarisation of Pakistan on religious, ethnic and sectarian grounds and the increased levels of violence in Pakistani society due to Jihadi influence and gun and drug culture. The conclusion is that with the rising political and financial stakes of religious, jihadi and military institutions in Pakistan, the triad needs continued hostility with India to consolidate their respective positions in society. This chapter also gives details of Jihadisation of Pakistani society, the growth of madarasas, the transformation of Pakistani institutions, and the growth of extremist groups and their political affiliations. The growing stronghold of terrorist organisations within Pakistan, especially Jaish-e-Mohammed (JeM) and Lashkar-e-Taiba (LeT), with their comprehensive social organisations, pose a threat to take over the state of Pakistan. The prospect of an entirely terrorist state as a neighbour has perhaps not yet dawned on the Indian nation. This assessment is followed by the growth of crime and terror in Pakistan and acts of terror in India. Thereafter, in the same chapter some interesting details of the military's influence in Pakistan and the militarisation of Pakistan's civil institutions are given followed by the oft repeated assertions that the military in Pakistan has developed the art of using the fear of India and the cause of Kashmiri Muslims to justify their existence, size and need for monetary activities. Under the section on "Authoritarian Governance", the number of detainees given under TADA (77, 571) and POTA (702) are given, showing the extent to which civil liberties are curbed in India.

Chapter Three deals with "Economic Costs" and gives details of Indo-Pak trade which has not been able to gain momentum due to conflict prone relations. The highlights of this chapter include the overall assessment that if both nations wish to become developed states in another 20 to 25 years they would require growth rates of 10 per cent and seven per cent (India and Pakistan) respectively for which the two essential features are resources and political attention.

As regards resources, there is an investment gap of \$ 51 billion for India and \$ nine billion for Pakistan. This can be filled by attracting huge FDIs, unlocking the rural economy and tapping the black money. These features would require transparency, speedy decision making and social reforms which in turn would require "undivided political attention".

In Chapter Four "Diplomatic Costs", the failure on part of both countries to resolve disputes through bilateral dialogue, brinkmanship and bellicosity have given other countries an excuse to interfere in the internal affairs of both the States. Diplomatic harassment during heightened

tensions have become a pattern. Both nations have proved to be the hurdle for each other, in securing membership of various blocks such as ASEAN, OIC and Shanghai Cooperation Organisation (SCO) apart from the slow movement of SAARC itself. The section on "Friends and Foes" in this chapter gives interesting highlights of India's and Pakistan's relations with US, China, Afghanistan, Iran, Israel and the Middle East and their respective attempts to influence events and develop relationships which are adversarial for the other nation least realising that in the long term both nations lose out on the economic and trade fronts; which become casualties to their mutual rivalry.

Chapter Five deals with "Costs for Jammu and Kashmir". It focuses on the fact that in real terms the contention is the Kashmir Valley and some parts of Jammu which constitute approximately 10,000 sq km with a population of about four million people and hence the entire problem is of an area which is approximately 0.25 per cent of the total area of India and Pakistan, and 0.25 per cent of the total economy of India and Pakistan. It then goes on to list the human costs in terms of life and property including internally displaced persons. The religious identity of the people killed is revealing, in that the maximum number of civilians killed in the violence of J and K are Muslims. Other costs unfolded are, psychiatric impact of violence, education related costs, the political killings, infrastructure costs, environmental costs and the impact on the Indian economy.

Chapter Six is termed the "Conflict Escalation Ladder" in which the escalation is described starting from interference in each other's internal problems, to increased terrorist violence and its effects on both nations, the consequent breakdown of bilateral ties, US intrusion in the dispute, disintegration of Pakistan by 2010, followed by a conventional war whose outcome favours India and, thus, an impending defeat that might lead the Pakistan military or ISI or extremist elements, to take over nuclear command and launch a nuclear strike on India followed by India's retaliation. The chapter ends on the note that even if half the available arsenal (Pakistan 24 to 48 bombs, India 60 to 90 bombs) is used, the fallout will mean complete annihilation of Pakistan and total destruction of parts of India. This chapter also states that though the possibility of this happening is near zero, it has been examined in view of the press reports that at least on two occasions in the last decade, Pakistani military leadership evaluated the nuclear option at least at the preliminary level.

Chapter Seven is on "Nuclear Confrontation : A Case Study", which commences by giving details of each nation's aircraft and missiles delivery systems, and goes on to build up nuclear attacks on Mumbai and Karachi

respectively, to show the horrendous effects of the nuclear strike in these two cities, that form a key social, economic, political, geographical and cultural link of their respective countries. The long-term effects on infrastructure, health, politics, economy and environment highlight the apocalyptic damage that would occur should such an event ever take place.

Chapter Eight is the last chapter and deals with the "Peace Building Ladder", which suggests a broad methodology, in five phases, to achieve a political solution to all outstanding conflicts.

At the end, after going through the entire publication, which is well documented, and has ample data for research students and planners and enough material for the media, one is left with certain distinct impressions which are listed below :-

- (a) The document does not state anything new but it does manage to put together logically, sequentially and quite convincingly data about the impact of rivalry between India and Pakistan on their development process, economies and their social and political lives and the growth of their military establishments.
- (b) At the present state of development of both nations there is a crying need for enlightened and bold leaders at the highest levels. These leaders have to bring about positive changes in administration and governance and introduce reforms which would benefit the poor and lift the latter out of the mire of unemployment, poverty, disease and ignorance based on our own models, relying on traditional Indian wisdom.
- (c) There are too many visuals comprising graphs, charts, lists and models which instead of aiding the process of understanding tends to distract the attention of the reader.
- (d) The political and financial stakes that the religious, jihadi and the military institutions have developed in Pakistan leads one to believe that this triad needs continued hostility with India for its existence and Jammu and Kashmir is only an excuse for a malaise which is deep rooted. Hence we need to be careful in the peace process, which is underway currently, and secure foolproof guarantees before making any concessions.