

**Sumit Ganguly, *Deadly Impasse: Indo-Pakistani Relations at the Dawn of a New Century*.
(Cambridge University Press, 2016),176.**

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Sumit Ganguly is a skilful writer and a yeoman whose book, *Deadly Impasse: Indo-Pakistani Relations at the Dawn of a New Century*, is based on secondary sources. It is an incisive promulgation of his own ideas regarding the nettlesome problems of Indo-Pak relations persisting since the partition of the Sub-continent in 1947. Focussed on the period between 1999 and 2009, his narrative is an attempt to describe the relationship in the purview of the theoretical framework. Sumit has attempted to analyse the security predicament of the two nuclear states in both spiral and deterrence model. His work is a valuable source for policy studies.

The evolution of rivalry between India and Pakistan is structured on the basis of Pakistan's inherent anxieties as a weak state since its time of inception. The territorial dispute of Jammu and Kashmir has mainly wrested the relationship. Pakistan, according to Sumit, is a 'revisionist power.' "unalterably committed to changing the territorial status quo regardless of Indian behaviour." (p.13) On the other hand, India insists on the status quo.

The animus continues during the first decade of the 21st century also. India and Pakistan has typically seen the upheavals of coercion and dialogue during this period as well. The upward spiral has evolved with the acquisition of nuclear weapons by both the states, arms race, lethal missile chase and excessive terrorism in the South Asian region. Consequently, unrelenting security dilemma is enthused more with fear and politics rather than trust and cooperation. It is increasingly unyielding in the era of regionalism and globalisation. Sumit has questioned this condition by composing the account of the events rather subjectively.

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In tandem with the thoughts of the Christine Fair in *Fighting to the End: The Pakistan Army's Way of War*, Sumit's fixation on Pakistan Army and Inter Services Intelligence (ISI) is held responsible for the Kargil issue discussed in the chapter *Kargil and After*. He believes that Pakistan Army's in nuclear umbrella, remains "*primus inter pare*" which can "either undermine or simply overrule its choices. In few areas, there is this tendency to intervene in the country's fundamental foreign policy choices is more pronounced." (p.34) The author has also blamed Pakistan army for indulging in proxy wars with India. The attack on Indian Parliament in 2001, the Mumbai Attack, the hijacking of Indian aircraft from Kandahar, the terrorist attacks on the Indian High Commission in Afghanistan and the sabotaging the efforts for engagement are all one-sidedly perceived as ISI ventures. The writer's advocacy has, however, failed to provide any substantive justification for a reader who disagrees with the author's narrative for calling Pakistan a predatory state. It belies the Indian confession of involvement in East Pakistan in 1970-71 through the proxy of *Mukti Bahini*. Similarly, the attack on Samjhota Express, soon after President Musharraf's and Prime Minister Vajpayee reached rapprochement followed by the Lahore-Delhi Bus Service, has not been analysed dispassionately by the writer. The onus is throughout on Pakistan.

The writer has denounced Indo-Pak rivalry extending to Afghanistan and Pakistan's doctrine of 'Strategic Depth' when it is having nuclear capabilities. Sumit calls it an "expansionist policy" of Pakistan in the chapter, *An extension of the rivalry*. He writes, "Pakistan has sought to dislodge India from Afghanistan. India's choices and actions in Afghanistan have been transparent that they have focused primarily on developmental activities and have not sought to undermine Pakistan's security." (P106) The narrative looks defensive in the wake of the arrest of Kulbhushan Yadav, a spy of Indian Intelligence Agency, Research and Analytical Wing (RAW), while infiltrating into Pakistan in March, 2016. He voluntarily confessed his support for disgruntled groups in Balochistan and Sindh, such as for Balochistan Liberation Front. Pakistan also holds substantial evidence of Indian sponsorship of terrorism through Tehrik-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) in collaboration with Kabul's National Directorate of Security and certain other power brokers. Some of this information has already been shared with the United Nations (UN) but has not stirred any action.

Ole Holsti explains such a relationship as a lose-lose situation since “one nation’s search for security often leaves its current and potential adversaries insecure.” Further, “any nation that strives for absolute security leaves all others in the system absolutely insecure providing powerful incentives for arms race and other types of hostile interactions.” India and Pakistan need to redefine their responsibilities at bilateral, regional and international level and characterise their national security in view of the emerging circumstances.

There are two main things missing in Indo-Pak relations: (a) shared thinking; (b) they also do not contain the grasp of each other's point of view. The continued security challenge and forces of history have impacted the destiny of both the nations. The perspective and domination of classical realism in writings of their relationship has largely ignored positive historical events such as, Liaqat-Nehru Pact (1950), Indus Water Treaty (1960), Simla Agreement (1972), Lahore Declaration (1999), Lahore-Delhi Bus Service, the “cricket diplomacy,” the resumption of the dialogue (Composite Bilateral Dialogue) between Pakistan and India in 2004. Some of these events took place even during the military rule in Pakistan. In his published reflections, Vajpayee, considered as a statesman of the genre of Nehru, has even “reaffirmed his government’s commitment to finding a final solution to the conflict (Kashmir) by going off the beaten record”.

The decision making on relations between India and Pakistan is equally plagued by both political and strategic counter-forces on both the sides of the border while keeping the threat perceptions elusive. In fact, strategic imbalance and military pressure, espoused with India’s Cold Start Doctrine and Second Strike Capability, are keeping misgivings alive. Frequent shelling on the Line of Control (LoC), deployment of advanced weapon systems (ballistic missiles and anti-ballistic missiles etc), expanded offensive deployments and aggressive military exercises to refine the surprise attacks, are all a sequel of belligerent outlook in India's Pakistan policy. This has also made the balance of power, a non-negotiable agenda, principle of political realism relevant to Indo-Pak relations.

The adequate identification of “principal danger” (p.126) by Sumit in the spaces provided by the vulnerabilities in Indo-Pak relations and their possible exploitation by the non-state actors is a valuable suggestion. This could be a catalyst for Indo-Pakistan rapprochement.