

India vs Pakistan: Why Can't We Just Be Friends? Husain Haqqani, 2016, Juggernaut Books, New Delhi, India.

Reviewed by:

Dr. Tahir Ashraf

Assistant Professor

Department of International Relations

Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan, Pakistan.

Pakistan-India conflict has made fate of more than one and half billion people of South Asia as hostage to it. Despite numerous peace overtures initiated by Pakistan and India normalization of bilateral relationship between both nuclear-armed neighbours have become a dream that isn't going to be realized in near future.

Husain Haqqani, a prolific writer, has served as advisor to both Benazir Bhutto as well as Nawaz Sharif-led governments in Pakistan. During third tenure of PPP (2008-2013) he has also served as Pakistan Ambassador to the US. His book "India vs Pakistan: Why Can't We Just Be Friends?" under review is an anecdote about the unending Pakistan-India rivalry.

The book has written in a short-story style, however, presents portrayal of the dynamics of Pakistan-India conflict beautifully and made no compromise on objective analysis of the factors that intensified the already charged atmosphere of Pakistan-India bilateral relationship. The author has presented narratives of both Pakistan and India about sources as well as triggering elements of their bilateral conflict. To him, the responsibility for the existing nature of relationship lies on both sides of the border, however, it has particularly been made jumbled by "Pakistan's near pathological obsession with India".

Ignoring perceptions of Pakistan's Jinnah and India's Bapu about future contours of bilateral relationship, the successive leadership on both sides made visions of Jinnah and Gandhi as blur. On one hand Jinnah's conciliatory approach towards India was rejected by the leadership of the Muslim League while on the other hand the Indian political leadership especially Nehru and Patel made reconciliation difficult. Political rivalry

between the All India Muslim League (AIML) and the Indian National Congress during the independence movement against the British couldn't be minimized even after the emergence of Pakistan and India in 1947. Rather, this conflict continued and shaped the future course of bilateral relationship between these two neighbours. Identifying causes for intensification of adversarial relationship of Pakistan-India, Husain Haqqani has traced lack of trust on both sides, political priorities at home, creation of narratives by both states especially Pakistan's narrative in the early days of nation-building and portrayal of self and adversary image.

What makes Haqqani's book as worth reading is presenting of complete facts which are generally not revealed or presented incompletely. For example, most of the literature on the Pakistan-India relations (by Pakistani authors) presents that India cut off the supply of water from two headworks of the Punjab canal system under its control in 1948 which resulted in great loss to agricultural production in newly born state. However, the provision of water was restarted after a month and India agreed to not withdraw water supply without permitting time to Pakistan for developing alternate sources of water. Similarly, he argues that the state of Jammu and Kashmir (a princely state out of 562 princely states) had adjoined both Pakistan and India while contesting the sole claim that Jammu and Kashmir had adjoined Pakistan only. According to Husain Haqqani, accession of Kashmir was due to poor-planning on the part of the Muslim League rather than the British-India conspiracy against Pakistan.

The Muslims from India could travel back and forth looking for better prospects till 1951 when Pakistan adopted its citizenship policy. And, Indian Muslims did not require a passport because it was not introduced until 1952. Interestingly, a Pakistan-India passport was usable only for travel between Pakistan and India and visa requirement came into effect only after the 1965 war. Interaction among Urdu poets, newspaper editors and professors was common while sports exchange and bilateral trade was continued despite currency and custom regulations.

Dramatic shift in early years of the Pakistan-India relationship came after Pakistan's first military coup in 1958. The army had started exercising its political sway especially when the first native commander of the Pakistan army, General Ayub (later Field Marshal) remained as commander for seven years despite frequent changes of several prime ministers of Pakistan. Ayub, under his leadership, made Pakistan army as an exalted institution that did not allow judiciary and other institutions getting strengthened.

Haqqani argues that the 1965 war was initiated by Pakistan based on its miscalculations due to death of Nehru and the Sino-India war in 1962. But, neither Pakistan nor India can be termed as victorious because neither side could achieve its declared objectives. However, continued fostering chauvinism in Pakistan and India led to breaking out of another war just after six years in 1971 which resulted into breaking up of Pakistan as its eastern wing ceded and emerged as Bangladesh. Allocating a separate chapter to the Kashmir issue entitled "Kashmir is Pakistan's Jugular Vein", Husain Haqqani has explained that how the Kashmir dispute has influenced decision-makers in both countries and examined seesaw relationship of Pakistan and India. According to him, Pakistan and India have been preoccupied by their respective stances on the status of Jammu and Kashmir. Neither side had been ready to give space to the other side. Pakistan wants resolution of Kashmir issue according to the UN Resolutions while India denies it and considers Jammu and Kashmir as its "*atoot-ang*".

Mr. Haqqani has highlighted a significant difference in approaches of Pakistan and India towards their bilateral relationship. To Mr. Haqqani, India perceives "normalization as a means of addressing disputes and issues that have proved intractable over more than six decades" while Pakistan continues to maintain that "normalization would be the end, rather than the means, of resolving the conflicting issues particularly the Kashmir issue". To break this stalemate, Husain Haqqani advises to Pakistan and India to learn from the similar experiences of other countries like China-Taiwan rivalry which

reveals that ‘friendship first’ approach works more effectively than ‘settlement first’.

Commenting on the evolution of bargaining positions of Pakistan and India, the author has rejected any significant change in it. Terming the Musharraf’s four-point formula presented by him in 2006 to resolve the Kashmir issue as some kind of replica of what General Ayub shared in his conversation with the US President Eisenhower in 1959. Ayub spoke for deal reflecting the interests of Kashmiris, Pakistan and India. Musharraf pronounced the compromise ‘through a process of elimination to eliminate any thing not acceptable to India, Pakistan and Kashmiris’. It is significant to mention that neither Pakistan nor India has modified her bargaining positions for more than six decades.

In the last, Mr. Haqqani explains that why space for friendship between Pakistan and India is shrinking. Analyzing chrematistics of the Indian and Pakistani minds, he has termed that the Indian mind is full of hatred against the Muslims while Pakistani mind is preoccupied with the desire of breaking up of India. Perceiving them as eternal enemies both sides have made normalization process as impossible. Indoctrination of the masses on both sides of the border by inculcating hatred against each other, glorifying wars, distorting the pre-1947 history of the area and saffornizing of India under the BJP rule are main barricades to normalization process between Pakistan and India.

In the backdrop of conflictual relationship between Pakistan and India generally and recent aggravation of the conflict in the Indian-held Kashmir resulted by invoking of the article 370 and 35-A on 5 August 2019 particularly, this book can be recommended to general readership. The book has a plenty of information for better understanding of the persistent India-Pakistan conflict due to stereotype thinking prevailing in both societies.