



Centre for Air Power Studies (CAPS)

Forum for National Security Studies (FNSS)

National Seminar

STATE OF PAKISTAN AND INDIA'S OPTIONS

Date: August 18, 2017

Venue: Air Force Auditorium, Subroto Park, New Delhi

India-Pakistan relationship continues to remain hostile and tenuous. Pakistan's support to anti-India terror groups has not allowed the relationship to settle down. The dichotomy of Pakistan's response to combat terrorism continues to be a matter of great concern. The recent spate of events concerning Pakistan warrants a closer look for analysis; the removal of Pakistani Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, US holding back \$300 million while China and Pakistan have formed a deep centre, especially focused on the China Pakistan Economic Corridor (CPEC) are aspects that needs a closer inspection.

Session I: Pakistan Today

Chairperson

Amb **Nalin Surie**, Director General, Indian Council of World Affairs

Speakers

Dr. **Shalini Chawla**, Senior Fellow, CAPS

Shri **Tilak Devasher**, Former Special Secretary, Cabinet Secretariat, Government of India

Lieutenant General **Ata Hasnain** PVSM UYSM AVSM SM VSM (Retd), Visiting Fellow, VIF

- The disqualification of Nawaz Sharif by the Supreme Court has created a political struggle in Pakistan. His attempts to normalize relations with India and accusations regarding the military's continued support for terror groups clashed directly with the latter's interests. **Military and Defence:** There has been significant development towards Pakistan's military modernization due to continued Chinese assistance with special focus on the air force and strike capabilities of the navy. Further, Pakistan has the fastest growing nuclear arsenal with 120-130 warheads. It has transitioned from credible minimum deterrence to full spectrum deterrence with the inclusion of tactical nuclear weapons.
- **Security Situation:** The frequency of terror attacks has reduced in Pakistan. However, there has been no change in the growth of extremism. Growth of extremism in the educational institutions is significant and alarming. **Non-Traditional Security Threats (NTST):** Issues related to water, education, economy and population continue to be peripheral issues in Pakistan as territorial security is the dominant concern; however, they are the major reason for domestic instability. Pakistan currently has the fastest growing population in the world. Instead of reaping a population dividend, Pakistan is plagued with high levels of poverty, unemployment and poorly educated or uneducated population. They have fewer institutions producing quality people as the curriculum in their institutions promotes hate and distorted world view. The economy generates employment for less than a billion per year in contrast to the 3 billion entering the labour market annually. Lack of gainful employment and illiteracy would increase frustration, alienation and violence in the society.
- **Economy:** While the growth rate has been stable at 5.3 percent, the macro-economic indicators have deteriorated over the decades. Pakistan's public debt is 76 percent of its GDP and its sources of receiving foreign exchange have declined. Although the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor is a game changer according to the Pakistani leadership, it has some expected fallouts: rise in interest payments on the government borrowing for CPEC projects and possible unrest in Baluchistan due to the locals protesting against the project and not receiving the optimum share.
- **External Dynamics:** Pakistan-US relationship has become strained due to the latter being increasingly critical and vocal of Pakistan's continued support to terrorism. However, Pakistan's growing dependence on stable Chinese aid and assistance which extends to

strategic, diplomatic and economic sphere has reduced its dependence on the United States. Pakistan's relationship with India remains hostile and thus dependence on nuclear weapons will increase and brinkmanship would continue.

Session II: India's Options with Pakistan

Chairperson

Air Marshal **Vinod Patney**, SYSM, PVSM, AVSM, VrC (Retd) Director General, CAPS

Speakers

Ambassador **TCA Raghavan**, Former Ambassador of India to Pakistan and Singapore

Lieutenant General **Philip Compose**, PVSM, AVSM, VSM (Retd), Former VCOAS, Distinguished Fellow and COAS Chair of Excellence, CLAWS

Diplomatic Options

- Diplomacy is the way to take to resolve the India-Pakistan hostility. Drastic actions such as scrapping off the Indus Water Treaty or removing the Most Favoured Nation status to Pakistan will bear no fruits. The approach needs to be pragmatic. Prior instances of pragmatic approach have led to resolving of many issue like the East Pakistan-India Border demarcation, and boundary issues in Punjab and Rajasthan.
- Pakistan's strategy in times of military conflict has been to bring in a limited conflict, which follows raising the issue at international forums to seek arbitrations that favour them. While India has taken different steps depending on the situation and the context. In the aftermath of the 2003 Parliament Attack, India resorted to coercive diplomacy by mobilising troops. Post the 2006 local train bombings in Mumbai, India tried to mobilise the international momentum against Pakistan. The Pathankot attack of 2016, India agreed for the first time, to set up a joint investigation team.
- The current state of affairs between India and Pakistan is similar to the situation in the 1990s. Especially given the increase in insurgency in the Kashmir valley. Pakistan may attempt to break the PDP-BJP alliance that governs the state to disrupt local politics. However, the dismissal of Nawaz Sharif as the Prime Minister may force the state to be

busy with its domestic situation. The US withdrawal from South Asian affairs and concerns can intensify the Chinese presence in the region.

- Hostilities at various levels have affected India's diplomacy with China and Pakistan. Thus, it is important to note that India does not deal with Pakistan and China at the same time.

Military Options

- A full scale conventional war is no longer an option, thus the military means available is that of a hybrid war. A hybrid war is an intelligent combination of various means of warfare put together to deal with a military situation. Hence, technology is going to play a major role in determining the exact nature of the military response. In India's case, essentially dealing with a Pakistan's sub conventional provocation involves appropriateness of response that targets achievement of punitive effect, without escalation beyond a point. Lower level military options such as raising the level of violence at the Line of Control, hot pursuit operations, raids, partial or full mobilisation would be preferable as the scope for escalation of 'tit-for-tat' actions would be limited. Moreover, the higher level military options run the risk of escalation and nuclear sabre-rattling. Lastly, the conventional deterrence must be credible as the aim is to 'wield the big stick' without having to actually use it.
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