

**Book Review
By
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Stephen P.Cohen, *Shooting for a Century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum* (Brookings Institution, 2013), pp.196

Stephen P. Cohen in his latest book *Shooting for a Century: The India-Pakistan Conundrum*, explores the main conflict between India and Pakistan. In order to understand the causes of the rivalry between these two South Asian neighbors he discusses various developments in their relations in the historical context. He further expands the discussions by including specific developments and likely future scenarios that may affect relations between the two states. The purpose of the study according to the author is to explore the possibilities of cooperation between the two states. He also compares India-Pakistan rivalry with Isreal-Palestinian conflict by relating similarities between them.

Cohen has developed a comprehensive theory based on the norm of 'normalization.' By its application on Pakistan-India relations he concludes why the disputes between India and Pakistan are likely to continue for the next century also. Cohen uses the tools of cooperation conflict spectrum as criteria by which he analyses different variables like social integration, economic development, security relations and diplomatic cooperation which can bring about normalization of relations between states. The book's major thrust is on identifying causes of mistrust between India and Pakistan. At the end the author also gives his recommendations for reducing mistrust between them, and steps that may enhance stability in the region.

The rivalry between India and Pakistan on different contentious issues is the cause of enmity, which is likely to continue in the author's opinion for many years. There is no hope in his opinion of India and Pakistan enjoying good neighborly relations due to absence of strategic commonalties between the two states. About the identity issue the author is of the view that Pakistan is experiencing an identity crisis as it has not yet resolved this issue. Pakistan's initial attempt to develop an 'un-Indian identity' has not been very successful.

Similarly Pakistan has not yet been able to decide whether it wants to be a modern state or an orthodox Islamic state. Foundation of India-Pakistan conflicts was laid by a dispute on Kashmir and identity issue. Therefore, throughout the study the writer highlights the Kashmir issue as he considers it a major bone of contention between the two states. Apart from existing disputes, absence of trade and commercial relations do not allow the two states to integrate and develop an economic interdependence.

In one of the chapters of the book entitled 'Explanation' Cohen discusses a number of factors which do not allow normalizing of relations between the two states. They are culture and civilization, state identity, Kashmir issue, role of outsiders, strategies, paired minority conflicts and an eternal rivalry etc.

While discussing the cultural and ethnic similarities between Pakistan and India he points out the marked differences of perception between the two countries in their culture, history and identity. He has used the term 'paired minority conflict' to explain the perception of each side against the other. Each side feels threatened by the other and opposes each other's proposals for cooperation and negotiations. On 'paired minority' conflict' he says that in India and Pakistan conflict is characterized by insecurity and distrust. Both sides feel threatened by attributed identity of the other state, and persecuted minority syndrome (existential threat). He sees limited role of outsiders in resolution of conflicts between the two states.

In the last chapter of the book the author discusses possible role of US to bring peace in the region through cooperation with both India and Pakistan. He argues that normalization between two South Asian rival states is far more important than the stability in Afghanistan for the United States. On the issue of nuclear proliferation and deterrence stability in the region Cohen advises the US to modify its South Asian policy. US, in his opinion should encourage the two states to bring nuclear stability in the region through establishing a regional nuclear regime. Cohen is also critical of United States' discriminatory policy of legitimizing Indian nuclear status and suggests that the same deal should be offered to Pakistan. On de-hyphenation of US policy in its relations with India and Pakistan, he is in favor of selective re-hyphenation of the two states. He is in favor of treating India and Pakistan together on certain issues and on other issues the two countries should be dealt separately. The author thinks that US should encourage both states to work together for stability and economic integration.

The book discusses the existing dimensions of difficult relations between Pakistan and India and analyses various underlying factors that have led to the creation of disputes in the first place, and the reasons disputes have remained unresolved for such a long time. The author's grasp of these issues and analysis makes the book a very valuable addition to the existing scholarship on the South Asian instability. It is not just another book on the subject but a book that is a must read for scholars and students of strategic studies and international relations.

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