

Book Review
By
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Khurshid Mahmud Kasuri, *Neither a Hawk Nor a Dove: An Insider's Account of Pakistan's Foreign Relations*, (Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2015) 876

Since 1947 Pakistani leaders and policy-makers have dealt with what can be called, "Pakistan's India problem". They have pursued hawkish policies and adopted dovish postures. Between these two extreme approaches, former Foreign Minister (FM), Khurshaid Kasuri, stands out as a 'centrist'. He has penned a voluminous memoir-policy book on Pakistan's foreign affairs from the vantage point of having remained the steward of Pakistan's diplomacy during 2002-07. Mr. Kasuri, provides insights into Pakistan's complex relations with India, Afghanistan and the United States, while surveying Islamabad's ties with rest of the world and also commenting on domestic politics to contextualize the discussion. The main focus of the book, however, is on India-Pakistan relations and related developments during his tenure as foreign minister. Centrist Kasuri, who refuses accept the label of a hawk or a dove, says he learnt to embrace the middle path from his father who while being a practising Muslim was also a staunch Marxist. The experience of being brought up in an environment shaped by his father's personality left a deep imprint on Kasuri.

He practised a similar approach during his days as foreign minister. He challenged traditional assumptions of Pakistan's foreign policy objectives. He sought "unsentimental weighing" of material forces in the context of history, culture and economy. For him, seeking equilibrium is the goal in international politics. Foreign policy should be based on internal strengths as emotional outbursts are not useful in dealing with other nations. He, correctly, calls on Pakistan to acknowledge that at times its national "objectives surpassed its capabilities and economic constraints and its military strategy and foreign policy goals were not always in sync with each other". Kasuri believes an enduring challenge of Pakistan is the "disconnect between its security objectives and economic realities".

While, being aware of the risks facing a Pakistani politician advocating a 'change' in policy towards India, he puts forward his case eloquently. On Pakistan's India problem, where domestic politics, in both countries, overshadows the foreign

policy imperatives, Kasuri supports and actively pursued normalization of relationship during his times. He advocates 'Peace with Honor' and economic cooperation leading to mutually shared prosperity. In his assessment, in the presence of nuclear parity, neither side can impose a 'decisive war' on the other. He claims to have also reasoned with military leadership the shortcomings of traditional policy towards India, which he considers had failed to protect and advance interests of either Kashmiris or Pakistan. He believes Pakistan army recognizes the need to pursue peace with India for socio-economic development of the country. But, it seeks peace on 'just and equitable terms', and it backed the peace process led by then President-General Pervez Musharraf.

When he entered into office, India and Pakistan commenced another round of backchannel negotiations to resolve the Kashmir dispute. Mr. Kasuri delves into some detail about the broad outlines of the proposed solution. It comprises reduction in violence i.e., stopping cross-LoC infiltration followed by dismantling of militancy infrastructure in Pakistan; demilitarization by both sides, first from civilian areas; providing identical measures of self-governance to both parts of Kashmir and strengthening Article 370 of Indian constitution; free and fair election, in both parts, open to international observers; defining administrative units of Kashmir and allowing each side to maintain administrative control over mutually agreed units; joint mechanism comprising Indo-Pak government representatives to monitor cross-LoC trade and travel; common policies towards development and sharing of water resources; and a yearly progress review process by Foreign Ministers for a period of 15 years.

This comprehensive agreement was to be followed by an Indo-Pak Treaty of Peace, Security and Friendship, thus laying the foundations of a normal state-to-state relationship. Another former Pakistani foreign minister, Ms. Hina Rabbani Khar has claimed to have seen the draft of the agreement with initials of respective Indian and Pakistani backchannel negotiators.

This draft failed to turn into a bilateral agreement because deteriorating internal political situation in Pakistan, in 2007, overtook the initiative. President Musharraf was forced to relinquish power. Mumbai attacks, subsequently, brought the peace process to a complete halt. Yet, Kasuri believes, whenever in future both sides resume dialogue process, this is the only way to go. He urges both the nuclear-capable nations to exercise restraint and pave way for peaceful resolution of

disputes. He also counsels Pakistani leadership and opinion-makers to be more reflective in their approach in dealing with Pakistan's eastern neighbor as their actions affect the lives of Muslims living in India.

A chapter each is devoted to Pakistan's complicated relationships with Afghanistan and the United States. Providing historical overview, Kasuri details Pak-Afghan ties during his tenure as Foreign Minister. From 2003 onwards as the security environment in Afghanistan deteriorated, ties between Kabul and Islamabad also strained, particularly the relationship between Presidents Karzai and Musharraf. In such an environment management of Pak-Afghan relations posed problems for the Foreign Minister. Kasuri believes Pakistan has the greatest stakes in peace and stability in Afghanistan and has moved away from the policy of supporting non-state actors operating in Afghanistan. Yet, for a lasting regional peace, Kasuri believes regional strategy involving India, China, US, and other neighbors of Afghanistan is needed.

Another chapter deals with Pak-US relations. It chronicles 'engagement and estrangement' in Pakistan's quest for strategic balancing in the region. During his tenure Afghanistan and Indo-Pak issues were the focus of Pak-US ties. Pakistan's cooperation in War against terrorism and Washington's active engagement in Indo-Pak peace process strengthened strategic understanding between the two sides. However, irritants did emerge. The issue of nuclear non-proliferation and A.Q. Khan affair, Pakistan's opposition to US invasion of Iraq, and Indo-US civil nuclear deal strained ties. But Presidents Bush and Musharraf continued to guide the relationship to expand defence and economic cooperation. After Kasuri's tenure, the relationship once again nosedived in the perpetual cycle of ups and downs. Kasuri predicts that bilateral ties will 'endure despite problems'.

A chapter is devoted to survey of Pakistan's foreign relations with China, Iran, Russia, Muslims nations of Turkey and Saudi Arabia, the Gulf region, Iran, Bangladesh, Japan, Britain, Canada, Australia, European Union, and the Common Wealth. Kasuri practised a dynamic and constructive foreign policy aimed at expanding cooperation with members of the international community. He deepened the country's foreign relations with its traditional friends and expanded the horizons to states of South America and Oceania region, including Australia and New Zealand. During Kasuri's era Pakistan practised active diplomacy around the world. Aside from pursuing normalization with India, the highlight of Kasuri's

tenure was his 'historic' meeting with Israeli foreign minister in Istanbul. Turkey facilitated the meeting. It was the first high-level formal contact between Pakistan and Israel, a state Pakistan has not recognized yet. Tel Aviv has expressed keenness in establishing bilateral diplomatic relations but Pakistan has been hesitant so far. President Musharraf and FM Kasuri attempted to make progress, but were held back by the constraints of domestic public opinion.

The last chapter addresses questions on the role of Pakistan's foreign office in the nation's foreign policy formulation. Kasuri believes that periodic military interventions in the country adversely affected a smooth foreign policy making process. At the same time, he recognizes contributions of Pakistan's able diplomatic corps in advancing national foreign policy objectives. Despite the default hawkish policy prescriptions of Pakistan's envoys, Kasuri maintains that the Foreign Office played a vital role during his era. He credits Foreign Secretary Riaz M. Khan for concluding civil-nuclear agreement with China, before the latter joining the Nuclear Suppliers' Group. The Foreign Secretary was also in the loop during the back channel negotiations with India. In fact, according to Kasuri, Foreign Secretary prepared notes for Pakistani negotiator Tariq Aziz for his meetings with his Indian counter-part. Candidly, Kasuri also acknowledges dissent within Foreign Office on his India policy.

Kasuri believed in giving a personal touch to public diplomacy. He actively engaged media persons and cites at length various media reports in his book, giving credence to them. He successfully managed media and domestic audiences while building outlines of a prospective framework for resolving Kashmir dispute. However, he also faced scathing criticism for meeting with Israeli Foreign Minister.

Grounded in history, and relativist political realism, Kasuri provides candid analysis of Pakistan's India problem and its past, present and future. He has produced a treatise on India-Pakistan relations, which will become essential reading for those seeking to understand complexities and constraints of conflictual nature of relations between two neighbours. Moreover, Kasuri's account places Pakistan's foreign policy in the context of strategic shifts due to imperatives of evolving international environment. Though he acknowledges that his survey of Pakistan's diplomatic engagement beyond India, Afghanistan and the US, requires separate volume, but a brief overview provides an insight into Kasuri's worldview.

He sought to promote regional and global peace, expand bilateral and multilateral cooperation while advancing social and economic development of the country.

In a country where external relations have been an integral part of domestic politics, debate about goals of foreign policy and imperatives of national interest have been rare. Not many Pakistani policy makers and practitioners have penned their thoughts on the national security and foreign policy of the country. Kasuri, however, has placed his book in the centre of internal and external challenges facing Pakistan. It is a welcome effort to trigger an informed national conversation about strategic vision of Pakistan's foreign policy as multiple futures stare the nation of 200 million and its leaders have to decide which road to traverse.

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