

Not War, Not Peace? Motivating Pakistan to Prevent Cross-Border Terrorism by George Perkovich and Toby Dalton,
New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016, pp. 310, INR 695

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The challenge for the strategists—indeed, the essences of strategy—is to force or persuade those who are hostile or unsympathetic to act differently than their current intention.

—Lawrence Freedman¹

The book—*Not War, Not Peace? Motivating Pakistan to Prevent Cross-Border Terrorism*—seems well-timed as it was released just few months before the surgical strikes conducted by Indian forces across the Line of Control (LoC), and appears to reflect the intentions of the Government of India. The central theme of the book is how to motivate Pakistan to dismantle anti-Indian organisations originating in and operating from its territory. This book certainly makes for an interesting read in the context of frequent cross-border firing between India and Pakistan and the proxy war being waged by the latter.

In this book, George Perkovich and Toby Dalton come out with wide-ranging options, both violent and non-violent, that are accessible to India to compel Pakistan to control the terrorist activities originating from its territory, as the onus is on India to ensure peaceful neighbourhood.

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The authors, in the first chapter, trace the key events since the 1990s, beginning from the Mumbai (then Bombay) blasts of 1993, Kargil War in 1999, the attack on the Indian Parliament in 2001, the 26/11 Mumbai attack of 2008 to the cross-border terrorism that has continued unabated, in order to explain the weaknesses in decision-making and policy formulation in India. There are certain modalities of decision-making that India lacks, which was brought out by the 2012 Report of the Naresh Chandra-led Task Force on National Security. It was clearly spelled out in the report that India did not have any national security doctrine of its own and hence, the bureaucracy should work and come out with a comprehensive doctrine (p. 28). With regards to the specific case of Pakistan, India must have an unambiguous strategy comprising of both long- and short-term strategies, which should be multifaceted and function simultaneously. This chapter analyses the shortcomings of policy-making which have affected the implementation of the national security strategy and defence modernisation plan.

The chapter highlights weak civil–military relations in the planning and execution of military strategy as compared to Pakistan. It argues that military officials are not involved in the policy making sphere, and their expertise is not appreciated by the political community while designing a strategy where the defence is a key factor. However, the authors also note that a comparison of Pakistan and Indian policy-making practices overlooks the differences in their priorities: while Pakistan continues to keep defence as a main agenda instead of development, India gives priority to other developmental issues, such as poverty, education, health, among others, and then looks at defence preparedness (p. 32).

Apart from weak civil–military relations, the chapter highlights the need for strong inter-service communication and cooperation. As Lambeth, a fighter pilot and RAND Corporation expert who examines the Indian Air Force (IAF) doctrine, says, ‘wars are rarely won...by single component of military force’ (p. 54). In the later part of the chapter, the authors critically analyse the weakness and loopholes (both institutional and procedural) and state that unless these shortcomings are rectified, India will not be able to accomplish its aim of motivating Pakistan to stop anti-India activities being undertaken from its territory.

In the subsequent five chapters, the authors have discussed in detail the diverse options that India could take vis-à-vis Pakistan. They analyse three basic questions to understand the probable action which will reap maximum benefits for India (p. 20):

1. How and in what directions does it motivate Pakistan to act?
2. What are the implications for the escalation management?
3. How does the conflict end?

The second chapter analyses the 'proactive strategy', which is more famously known as the Cold Start doctrine (2004), a term apparently coined by a journalist to whom this information was leaked (p. 76). However, the Cold Start doctrine failed due to two reasons: first, India was gung-ho about a capability that it did not possess entirely; and second, it was not able to deter Pakistan, which was a key aim. Instead, India's articulation of Cold Start alerted Pakistan and gave it a reason to justify an intensive production of nuclear weapons (p. 78).

Therefore, the authors suggest an assessment of Pakistan's reaction with special consideration of nuclear response and its impact on India. As assessed by Ali Ahmed:

The window that appeared to exist between the sub-conventional and nuclear planes is not as wide as was first thought. This re-evaluation may result in a decisive move away from limited war to short, sharp, military engagements not amounting to war. This may be more in keeping with war avoidance, critical in the nuclear age. (p. 97)

The United States (US) and Israeli Air Force actions seem to have encouraged India to take its air power more seriously, forcing it to think that airborne strikes will be of prime importance in the near future. However, in the third chapter, the authors make an attempt to explain the pros and cons of airstrikes, taking note of IAF capability. The authors have made a statement that IAF's offensive capability is weaker than that of the US and Israeli air forces and that the air defence of Pakistan is greater than that of the US and Israel (p. 105). Their assessment of air strikes explains that any airborne strike till date has not been foolproof and successful because it is indiscriminate in nature, killing citizens and causing huge infrastructural losses. Hence, the importance of ground forces (that is, the army) cannot be sidelined. Moreover, the authors claim that due to their being nuclear-armed nations, the implications in the case of India and Pakistan are different as compared to American and Israeli actions. Hence, the use of air power can further escalate and complicate the matter and cause failure of the objective to motivate Pakistan.

In Chapter 4, the option of covert operations is critically assessed and the authors conclude that this kind of an action may deter Pakistan and

compel it to come to the negotiating table. However, as any other option, this too may have its own risks and challenges. If India can compel Pakistan, then, at the same time, any loose or untoward attempt may do just the opposite and harm India's image in the international arena. One of the important factors to be kept in mind is the deniability of action, which India cannot afford to lose.

In the same chapter, the authors go on to assess certain options that can directly deter actors in Pakistan from acting violently against India and make Pakistani authorities demobilise the anti-India organisations breeding in and operating from its territory—for example, by directly targeting terrorists and coercing the Pakistani state through various means. With all these options, there are certain risks involved. If India fails to overcome these, it will not only obstruct its motive but also distort its image as a leader of South Asia and affect its long-term strategies to shape future relations in the region.

Finally, in the fifth chapter on nuclear capabilities, the authors analyse the potential risks and benefits of options involving conventional military force and covert operations that India could deploy to motivate Pakistani authorities to prevent further terrorists activities. Knowing the fact that India does not have a written nuclear doctrine, the authors take the opportunity to suggest how India should visualise its doctrine and capabilities. The authors have tried to bring out the importance of innovative doctrine which will compliment India's decision to use any of the aforesaid options. They discuss reconsidering its 'no first use' policy and massive retaliation, and also deliberate the possibility of escalation from conventional and massive nuclear retaliation, which will make India pose a more symmetrical deterrent balance to Pakistan. This would strengthen the credibility of India's conventional military response.

The final chapter on non-violent compellence explores the various way in which India can use non-violent methods to pressurise the Pakistani government to prevent violent threats against India. Some of the non-violent ways suggested by the authors are: economic sanctions; political isolation; international social media movement to challenge the legitimacy of the government; talks with the US and China regarding assistance to Pakistan; and a naval blockade to create hurdles in import and export (though the authors argue that Indian Navy is incapable of imposing a naval blockade). It may be true that the non-violent compellence may be less risky and cost effective but, at the same time, it has been less effective

in changing the behaviour of Pakistani establishments against India. The authors have also not taken into consideration the point that Pakistan is used to such non-violent actions and all of this has failed to gain any benefits for India till now. It needs to be noted that though soft power plays an equally important role as hard power, the key to its success is to have skilled operators who can use non-violent compellence along with the conventional methods. The use of the right method at an opportune time in order to transform the behaviour of the adversaries through a use of mixed strategies can be beneficial.

To conclude, it can be said that the book has been written with a lot of rigour and displays comprehensive assessment of violent and non-violent options available to India that can be taken in case the hostile situation between India and Pakistan eventually turns into a war-like situation. It gives the reader an analysis of the environment in which India and Pakistan co-exist. It makes it clear that none of the options are risk free and it is necessary to analyse each one of them before taking a call. The book can prove to be a good foundation for readers interested in knowing about the ways and means of engaging with Pakistan in a military environment.

However, the book does not justify the central theme of ‘motivating Pakistan to prevent cross-border terrorism’ as it looks more like a critical analysis of the Indian defence system, highlighting the shortcomings rather than answering the question of how to motivate Pakistan. The core argument of the book would thus seem to deviate from its aim as suggested by the title and claim that India is not yet ready to deliver a robust military response to Pakistan in case a war-like situation occurs.

The book explores the limitations of India’s armed responses to challenges posed by terrorism emerging from Pakistan. The authors analyse the range of options available—from covert operations to air power to nuclear capabilities—and conclude that Pakistan would gain from all actions taken by India as the latter lags in technology and policy planning. Would the reader be convinced with such an argument? It is unclear whether many would agree with the authors’ assessment. Overall, the book could be useful for referencing and conducting research on India’s military modernisation plans and taken as an addition to the debate on policy and decision-making procedures. The detailed discussion on each plausible action that India can take *vis-à-vis* its neighbour also serves to highlighted the current status of the Indian defence system.

NOTE

1. As cited in George Perkovich and Toby Dalton, *Not War, Not Peace? Motivating Pakistan to Prevent Cross-Border Terrorism*, New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2016, p. 27.