

**Richard Bonney,
Tridivesh Singh Maini
and Tahir Malik (Eds.),
Warriors after War:
Indian and Pakistani
Retired Military Leaders
Reflect on Relations
between the Two
Countries, Past, Present
and Future, Bern,
Switzerland: Peter Lang
Publication, 2011.**

*Sanjeev Kumar Shrivastav**

This is an interesting book which offers views, insights and analyses of the relations between India and Pakistan through the interviews with top 26 ex-military officials from both the nations. These officers from both the sides held important positions and provided crucial leadership to their respective militaries in the years after the birth of two nations in 1947. The book attempts to explore whether sustainable peace is possible between both the nations and what are the prospects for the resolution of all outstanding issues between the two nations including the Kashmir dispute. It also explores whether the nature of conflict between India and Pakistan has changed ever since both the sides acquired nuclear weapons. An analysis of views expressed by ex-officials from both the sides reflects the deep differences and the prejudices that exist between India and Pakistan. However, there are some interviewees' who are optimistic about the future; however such voices are in minority. It must be admitted that ex-officials from both sides share fascinating anecdotes, experiences and observations on India-Pakistan relations which make this book an excellent to read. Richard Bonney who is one of the three editors of the book, has written a brilliant introduction and conclusion.

The editors point out that the urge and impetus for conflict resolution and peace between India and Pakistan in 1995, interestingly came, not from politicians but two ex-military officials from both nations who approached the Institute for Multi-Track Diplomacy (IMTD), a Washington based non-profit organisation headed by

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former US Ambassador John W. McDonald, for this purpose. The IMTD then began working on a confidence building project between the two nations. Meanwhile, the idea for this book came from the opening of the Srinagar-Muzaffarabad bus route on April 7, 2005, which was the first link between the two parts of the divided Kashmir since 1947.

The book begins with a long general editor's introduction written by Bonney which is followed by a short formal introduction by all three editors. Bonney discusses the legacy of partition in Indian sub-continent in 1947. He notes that "a key underlying question is whether the poison that was generated by the British-imposed partition of the subcontinent in 1947 is still its way through the system of international relations in South Asia." He points out that even after the painful process of partition during which thousands of people lost their lives, Kashmir remained an unfinished business between India and Pakistan. Even now it still remains a complicated issue between the two countries. Bonney also deliberates upon the competing strategic cultures between India and Pakistan by citing historical anecdotes and references of views from prominent strategic thinkers and practitioners.

In the formal introduction, editors state that choice of interviewees was adventitious. They interviewed those ex-military officials who wanted to share their views with the public. The questionnaire for the each interview was prepared in accordance with the experience and expertise of the interviewees. Though there were some general questions such as the prospects for an India-Pakistan peace and on the resolution of Kashmir crisis etc. which are quite natural given the purpose of the book. The nature of each questionnaire is such that it generally generates an elaborate and analytical response from the interviewee.

The book is divided into two parts. Each part begins with the brief biographies of the all 13 interviewees followed by interviews. All 26 interviews revolve around the wars of 1947, 1965, 1971 and Kargil in 1999. The ex-officers from both sides contend that in an environment in which both India and Pakistan possess nuclear weapons the two can not afford to resolve their disputes through war anymore. However, officers differ on ways and methods to achieve sustainable peace between the two countries as well as for the South Asian region as a whole.

An analysis of interviews further suggests that Pakistan's capacity to influence the outcome of Kashmir dispute has diminished as India's power and influence has risen. India's relations with the United States have improved substantially in the post-Kargil phase. However, some officials are of the view that in order to ensure a sustainable peace between India and Pakistan regular dialogue and people to people contact between the two sides are necessary. Interestingly, most of the officers from both the sides agree that a degree of nuclear deterrence has

been achieved in South Asia. Since complete disarmament is unlikely to take place, this state of affairs is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future which will tend to discourage any breakout of conventional war between the two nations. Interviewees have reflected their views not only on bilateral issues but also role of United States and its policies in the South Asian region as well as their impact.

In the concluding chapter, Bonney criticises the arguments of some Indian interviewees that due its large size, India can survive a nuclear attack and Pakistan cannot. He notes that since the large Indian population centres are still within the reach of Pakistani nuclear attack, the damage would be unacceptably high. He points out that competition in risk taking by the leaders makes difficult for analysts to judge the level of concern.

According to Bonney, Indian ex-military leaders believe that Pakistan cannot be trusted because of its proxy war against India. Pakistan's military is prone to developing close ties with Islamists militants. Indian occupied Kashmir is an integral part of India and any transgression across the Line of Control like Kargil should be countered. On the other hand, Pakistani ex-military officials emphasise the Kashmir issue. They point out that if India had not been hostile towards Pakistan since the partition, the relations would have been normal. During the process of analyses, Bonney also refers to the views expressed by great Indian strategic thinkers such as K. Subrahmanyam, J. N. Dixit as well as the then Pakistani army Brigadier Pervez Musharraf's thesis on India-Pakistan relations written in London in 1990.

The book has six appendixes, postscript, bibliography, the timeline of the India-Pakistan conflict and an index. These appendixes and postscript supplement the reader very well in order to understand the views expressed by interviewee's officers.

This book provides an intriguing account of the diversity of views among ex-officials with regard to India-Pakistan relations. Since these officials have been major stakeholders in history of relations between the two nations, thus, naturally it provides very insightful comments and suggestions regarding the bilateral relationship. This book could prove to be a useful collection for those officials, researchers, students as well as general readers who wish to understand the complexities involved in India-Pakistan relations and are in search for some appropriate and good answers.

