

Book Review
By
MAJID MEHMOOD

George Perkovich and Toby Dalton,
Not War, Not Peace? Motivating
Pakistan to Prevent Cross-Border
terrorism (Oxford University Press,

New Delhi 2016), 297

The book titled “*Not War, Not Peace? Motivating Pakistan to Prevent Cross-Border terrorism*” co-authored by George Perkovich and Toby Dalton is a thorough analysis of policy options available to India and their feasibility in dealing with cross border terrorism generating from Pakistan. The book is also about how Indian calibration of the policy options may motivate or compel Pakistani policy makers to end their proxy war against India. The title of the book “*Not War, Not Peace?*” describes the complex relationship between Pakistan and India, two nuclear armed rivals, as it exists today. In the authors’ perceptions, limited wars under nuclear overhang and coercive compellence, instead of give and take bargaining, are very much part of policy milieu in India and Pakistan. Will these policies achieve their desired objectives is what the question mark in the title suggests. The authors have taken a position in the title about Pakistan being a source of terrorism inside India which reads “*Motivating Pakistan to Prevent Cross-Border terrorism*” and have built the argument forward from this baseline.

The book contains six chapters each detailing a single policy option available to India. The chapters link up with the broader theme of book’s title “*Motivating Pakistan to Prevent Cross-Border terrorism*”. The cost benefit analysis and issues related to real Indian capabilities, as opposed to projected capabilities, to achieve policy ends vis a vis Pakistan are succinctly analyzed in each chapter. The authors conclude that an appropriate mixture of violent and non-violent strategies coupled with domestic Indian reforms in defense and intelligence sector will enable India to address its most important foreign policy challenge: Pakistan.

In the first chapter titled 'decision making setting' the authors argue that Indian strategic decision making system needs significant reforms against problems like defense procurement, lack of military input in defense planning and inter-services rivalry. Indian leaders, the authors argue, should also enhance their understanding of Pakistan, its interests and the decision making process. Moreover, without a deep understanding of Pakistani motivations it will not be able to address its Pakistan challenge.

Second chapter explains the feasibility and impact of Indian land based operations or proactive operations in deterring Pakistan against using terrorism as a policy instrument. The authors argue that India has several problems with the large scale land operations both conceptually as envisioned in the Cold Start Doctrine (CSD) as well as politically. This doctrine struggles to answer an important question as to how these land operations will motivate Pakistan to demobilize the India centric terrorist groups. Several operational deficiencies in the Cold Start Doctrine and interplay of nuclear factor and Pakistani responses are discussed in this chapter in detail.

Third chapter of the book analyses impact of use of airpower, specifically in the form of limited air strikes against alleged terrorist training camps in Pakistan, to motivate and compel Pakistan to rein in anti-India groups within. Authors are skeptical about achieving the desired Indian objective while using air power as a stand alone option. Moreover technical, institutional and operational impediments within Indian Air force are explained in detail. Authors are of the opinion that the option of limited air strikes may turn domestic public opinion in favor of Indian government but the larger strategic objectives vis a vis Pakistan will not be achieved. The chapter also details the problem of real time deficiencies of Indian intelligence capabilities in identifying terrorist targets in Pakistan for elimination by air strikes.

Perkovich and Dalton doubt that US and Israeli models of eliminating their enemies via air strikes would be workable for India due to near parity with Pakistan in military domain. Moreover, the authors are of the view that US and Israeli model even though successful in surgical elimination of their enemies at tactical level has failed to produce a strategic effect of winning the larger conflict.

The chapter on using covert intelligence operations to demobilize anti-India groups based in Pakistan comprehensively describes all facets of covert operations, their limits and potential benefits if aligned with the larger foreign policy framework. The authors concede that it is almost impossible to measure Indian covert capabilities through public sources. The chapter traces the evolution of Indian covert operations capabilities under the political guidance of successive Indian governments from 1990's onwards. Some insightful interviews by former high ranking Indian officials gives the impression that Indian covert operations infrastructure has seen both extremes since the Gujral administration i.e. total shutdown and raising capabilities for offensive actions abroad from scratch.

The book expounds the view that success and failures of covert operations have not ended its utility around the globe and the test for statecraft is how well it can bargain with its adversary by leveraging the pressure generated through covert operations abroad.

Chapter five titled '*nuclear capabilities*' assesses potential changes India could make in the nuclear doctrine and force posture in order to complement its army and air centric operations to achieve twin objectives of compelling Pakistan to abandon proxy warfare and secondly prevent Pakistan from escalating conflict in the event of large scale Indian military operations. The authors are of the view that existing Indian nuclear doctrine may not be suitable to cater for land operations inside Pakistan and it could consider adopting *limited nuclear options* to counter Pakistan's use of battlefield tactical nuclear weapons. If India decides on the limited nuclear options, the authors argue, it will need significant institutional and operational changes which India lacks currently.

The Last chapter of book discusses non-violent compellence measures such as use of diplomatic pressure, soft power projection, information campaign, naval blockade and sanctions to compel Pakistan to change course vis a vis India. Perkovich and Dalton conclude that '*Not War, Not Peace*' will be a foreseeable future of India –Pakistan relations.

The book's strength is that it extensively quotes from the interviews of recently retired Indian and Pakistani officials who have an experience in

dealing with issues discussed. Moreover, each chapter is comprehensive enough to cover a particular issue with a certain policy approach as seen from an Indian angle. The language is simple and arguments are easy for ordinary reader to comprehend. Authors have tried to explain some concepts, where possible, before initiating a larger policy debate based on those explanations.

The book's weakness is lack of a theoretical framework that could have helped the reader understand the book's title and policy issues discussed. Several issues can be raised about the book based on this observation.

For instance, would it be prudent to limit India's Pakistan problem to merely terrorism believed to be originating from Pakistan? Indeed India's Pakistan challenge encompasses much more than what the authors envision. India's Pakistan problem actually revolves around Pakistan military's war fighting potential and resultantly its ability to block and frustrate India's regional plans. The policy options discussed in the book, specifically India's land, air and nuclear based military operations and diplomatic pressures, which will ultimately affect Pakistan's military war fighting potential. The authors have rightly argued about the possibility of such undertakings.

Moreover, the book does not explain what exactly is meant when the authors use the terms like "demobilizing anti-India groups" or "motivating Pakistan to prevent cross border terrorism". These terms can have multiple meanings and impacts on Indian policy thinking if a certain definition is adopted by it. For example, since the time of Pervaiz Musharraf till date the anti-India groups in Pakistan have been dormant and have kept a low profile in terms of their operations in Indian held Kashmir. These groups have either converted themselves to humanitarian organizations while others have simply been lying low. Knowledgeable Indians appreciate a significant drop in cross LoC infiltration since 2004 as opposed to pre-2001 era. The point is whether India, in terms of policy consideration, wants the preservation of the militant status quo or would like Pakistan to move further against such groups? This distinction is missing in the book.

Other issues in the book also merit more attention. For instance, regarding discussion of India's land based operation against Pakistan, whether cold start military doctrine is really as defensive as proclaimed by Indians? What

if, in a future war, Pakistan occupies more important territory than India? In such a plausible scenario war objectives of India may change towards destroying Pakistan's war potential and will no longer be limited to eliminating perceived Pakistani support to terrorism. Resultantly, mutual bargaining for war termination will be an overarching goal rather than terrorism which itself will be a complex issue.

Similarly, regarding the employment of limited airstrikes coupled with movement of some Indian troops along the border may be desired by Indians as escalation dominance but the perceptions across the border will differ. How would the weakening of Pakistan's war fighting potential help India to compel Pakistan to move against anti-India groups, if that is the real Indian objective?

The question what will transpire after a first nuclear use and unknown consequences and trajectory of conflict is discussed in detail in the discussion about nuclear options. The issue that requires more deliberation is how India's adoption of '*limited nuclear options*' will enhance Indian deterrence against Pakistan? It is noteworthy that trajectory of war will determine escalatory dynamics and war termination conditions. Escalation dynamics cannot be separated from these factors and the larger political objectives of war.

Perkovich and Dalton could have dwelt on impact of nuclear weapons in limiting the threat of war and how can this potentially effect bargaining positions of both India and Pakistan.

Though the book adds little in terms of offering a new policy conversation, as seen from an Indian angle, but it still raises some new issues which will be deliberated upon and analyzed at both academic and official levels. Especially within the context of ongoing crisis in Indian held Kashmir, the Uri attack and Indian and Pakistani responses and future trajectory, assumptions and the substance of this book will be tested. This is why this book must be read and thoroughly analyzed.

*Majid Mehmood is an
Associate Research Officer at CISS*