



Editorial

The winter 2012 volume of *Peace Prints* on “Building Peace between India and Pakistan: Opportunities and Challenges” brings together diverse issues and voices with a purpose to generate fresh and innovative ideas to build sustainable peace, security, and coexistence between India and Pakistan. Dedicated to the daily strivings of hundreds of young Indian and Pakistani peacebuilders who work untiringly to bridge the myriad divisions, this edition of *Peace Prints* calls on the citizens of India and Pakistan to enter into a space of dialogue, to “walk in the shoes of the other”, and to critically engage with their own perceptions about the conflict. A reengagement with perceptions is particularly vital because subjective emotions such as fear, suspicion, anger, and prejudice have played a big part in escalating disagreements between the two countries. As Richard Solomon, a former President of the United States Institute of Peace, Washington DC, puts it,

Sustainable peace requires that long-time antagonists not merely lay down their arms, but that they achieve profound reconciliation that will endure because it is sustained by a society-wide network of relationships and mechanisms that promote justice and address the root causes of enmity before they regenerate destabilizing tensions.

The beginnings of such reconciliation were seen in 2004 when the reenergized composite dialogue enabled thousands of Indians and Pakistanis to cross the border for cricket matches, shopping, exchange programs, and just simple conversations. The high point of this coming together of hearts and minds was a particularly poignant banner with the words *Pyaar To Hona Hi Tha* (Love was Inevitable), which was seen on the streets of Lahore in 2004 in response to the Indian cricket team’s maiden victory in Pakistan. Pakistanis celebrated the victory with firecrackers, and later, Pakistani President General Pervez Musharraf summarized his own hope with the statement that the peace process was now “irreversible”. Significantly, these initiatives went beyond cultural bonhomie and nostalgia and were based on practical assessments of the reality that peace, prosperity, and economic growth are intertwined. There was also the recognition that the *third and fourth generations*—the under 35-population in Pakistan, Kashmir, and India—have common aspirations and dreams for themselves and their families. And perhaps, the future which unites them could be more powerful than the history that divides them.

While the seeds of reconciliation were sown in the first decade of the 21st century, developments during these years also revealed just how fragile the peace process was. They demonstrated that while a deep, rich, and shared culture bound together the people of the two countries in intimate relationships, there also existed stark differences and a sense of fear and mistrust. Most significantly, the stalemates of the last few years have exhibited the immense power that the spoilers continue to wield and the vested interests that thrive on the perpetuation of the conflict. The most visible example of this was the Mumbai terror attack in November 2008.

Yet, the seeds of peace, sown through the efforts of numerous peacebuilders—in government, politics, business, media, and civil society—over the last decade have begun to grow and flourish. Despite the setbacks and stalemates, the official-level dialogue was resumed in 2011, and the year 2012 witnessed unprecedented bilateral agreements that opened the floodgates of trade and commerce and enabled Indians and Pakistanis to invest in each other’s countries. This was followed by the introduction of a new, liberalized visa regime that made cross-border

travel less cumbersome. The two governments have shown a serious interest in making systematic efforts to advance the composite dialogue. Progress in other sectors such as sports and cultural and youth exchanges has also helped to create an atmosphere conducive for government-level talks. In addition, some very significant developments have taken place outside of track one – as part of a back channel process.

The time is perhaps ripe for a genuine and long-lasting engagement between the peoples of the two countries to once and for all transform “rage into reconciliation” and construct identities that are inclusive, cross-cutting, and harmonizing. It was in this context that the *Peace Prints* journal invited articles from scholars and practitioners in India and Pakistan to share their views on the way forward. The edition includes a wide range of perspectives and cross-cutting themes that have influenced the trajectory of bilateral relations over the last couple of years. The purpose is to foreground peacebuilding strategies in the amalgam of contentious issues as also to point to the interdependent relationship between ostensible “dividers” and “connectors”.

While some of the authors have taken positions that might be considered detrimental to peacebuilding, these views are included in the belief that constructive social change requires dialogue between adversarial viewpoints; a courageous engagement between worldviews that collide and represent different ends of the continuum.

The first cluster of papers focuses on the structure, content, and accomplishments of the peace process initiated between the two countries through the vehicle of the government-level composite dialogue. Initiated in 1997 following a commitment by the two governments to hold regular meetings and talk about all outstanding issues simultaneously in different but linked forms, the composite dialogue identified eight issues for discussion.¹ It was hoped that, over the years, the agenda of this government-level dialogue would be lightened through the resolution of some issues. On a couple of occasions, the two countries even came close to agreement on issues such as Siachen and the Tulbul Navigation Project. At the same time, new issues and stalemates emerged. While the composite dialogue has provided an incredibly forward looking framework, where does it stand today? How might this process move forward to achieve real results and expand the constituencies for peace in the two countries?

Addressing these questions, Meenakshi Gopinath, in her paper *Processing Peace: To Speak in a Different Voice*, is upbeat about the composite dialogue yielding positive outcomes for both India and Pakistan. It reflects “India’s approach of using a problem-solving orientation to work around the ‘Kashmir factor’ to improve its relationship with Pakistan”. Saying that the “biggest gains of the composite dialogue have been on Kashmir”, Gopinath outlines the contours of a proposal – some commentators say agreement – on the resolution of the Kashmir conflict that was discussed between President Pervez Musharraf and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh between 2004 and 2007. The paper also traces the ebbs and flows of this government-level dialogue, foregrounding its attempt to increase face-to-face dialogue between ordinary Indians and Pakistanis as well as moments when political leaders on both sides took high-risk “leaps of trust” to reach out to “the other”, even when this meant a conscious exhibition of their own vulnerabilities.

¹ These included Jammu and Kashmir, terrorism and drug trafficking, peace and security, conventional and nuclear CBMs, Siachen, Tulbul Navigation Project/Wullar Barrage, Sir Creek, economic cooperation, and people-to-people contacts (which included an effort to liberalize the visa regime and promote friendly exchanges).

Rizwan Zeb is less optimistic in his paper *Peace brew-ha-ha all over again: India and the Peace Process*. He points to the differences in approaches adopted by Islamabad and New Delhi, with the former wishing to “resolve the conflicts” and the latter wanting to “manage the conflicts”. This, in Zeb’s view, is a key factor in the perpetuation of the stalemate. Elucidating on the spoilers who have the power to derail the peace process, Zeb postulates that the India-Pakistan peace process suffers from a “classic spoiler problem” – a recent example being the Mumbai terror attacks. In this context, he draws on existing theoretical formulations on the subject of spoilers to articulate the way forward. He states that while considerable emphasis has been placed on what Pakistan must do to advance bilateral peace, little attention has been given to the steps that India should take to participate fully and to contribute to the success of the peace process. In this context, Zeb argues that as long as Indian decision-makers link the timing of a final settlement to Pakistan’s internal security situation post-9/11 and believe that they are “bargaining from a position of strength”, the current phase of the composite dialogue is likely to hit another stalemate.

B.G. Verghese presents the flipside to Zeb’s arguments in the paper titled *The Road to Reconciliation with Pakistan: Sifting Causes from Consequences*. He believes that the current phase of the peace process holds the promise of a durable agreement because the Pakistan Army, which has been averse to better bilateral ties, is now favourably inclined to participate in a dialogue with India. Echoing Indian Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru’s statement that the Kashmir question was not the cause but the consequence of the India-Pakistan stand-off, the roots of which go back to the “Two Nation Theory”, Verghese states that today,

It is clear to both sides that there is no other solution barring refinement of the concept of a soft border, greater internal autonomy on either side of the LoC, and the evolution of cross-border institutions and relationships over time. The fact of a boundary matters less than the nature of that boundary – barrier or bridge?

Employing the lens of game theory in his study titled *Kashmir: The Prisoner’s Dilemma for India and Pakistan*, Saeed Ahmed Rid states that individual rationality has pushed the two countries to adopt a dominating strategy over Kashmir, leading to several full-fledged and limited wars. Foregrounding collective rationality, he believes that constructivist, conflict transformation, and multi-track diplomacy approaches can help the neighbors to successfully use negotiation to resolve the vexed issue of Kashmir. In this context, he recommends that the composite dialogue place greater emphasis on multi-track diplomacy to build relationships across the vertical and horizontal divisions of the conflict and to expand the constituencies for peace.

While there have been suggestions that the composite dialogue has outlived its purpose, many commentators have opined that this is not so much due to a lack of resolve; rather, there has been a supersession of interests wherein new issues have gained significance. For example, while the issue of water sharing was not a prime focus of the dialogue (and in fact the Indus Waters Treaty was seen as a successful peace agreement), in recent years, it has emerged as an increasingly vexatious conflict. Manish Vaid and Tridivesh Singh Maini address this conflict over water sharing in their paper *Indo-Pak Water Disputes: Time for Fresh Approaches*. They examine the disagreements over the sharing of the Indus waters and its tributaries, analyzing some of the policy failures which led to the water crises, especially in Pakistan. In conclusion, the authors advocate a non-traditional security and non-technical approach, suggesting

innovative ways that focus on greater cooperation between the agricultural universities, joint studies on the region's glaciers, and frequent interactions between farmers of the two countries.

Shifting focus to an issue—education—that has served as a “divider” between the two countries, but which has recently shown potential to transform into a “connector”, Anam Zakaria's article titled *Exchange for Change: A Study of Micro-Level Conflict Resolution Initiatives between Pakistani and Indian School Students* shares field experiences from a cross-border initiative that worked with the *fourth generation* in the two countries. Titled *Exchange-for-Change*, the program reached out to 2400 school children with a purpose to invoke critical thinking, enhance the next generation's understanding of their shared history, culture, and lifestyles, and introduce an alternative narrative into school curricula which highlighted examples of cross-community friendship and inter-faith harmony that existed for centuries before the partition of 1947. This was done through face-to-face meetings which were sustained via a continuous exchange of letters, postcards, photographs, and a series of oral history interviews (that the students conducted with their grandparents). Here, Zakaria reflects on the program's accomplishments as also the challenges it faced, often from unexpected quarters, in both Pakistan and India.

Afsheen Naz invites the reader to engage with a potent “connector” — economic cooperation — which reflects the mutuality of economic interest and the recognition, in both countries, that their prosperity and development are interlinked. Titled *Political Dominance or Economic Gains: A Case Study of India-Pakistan Trade and Perceptions of the People of Pakistan*, Naz, in her paper, examines the perceptions of a cross-section of Pakistani society on the pros and cons of enhanced trade and investment between India and Pakistan. While economic cooperation has been touted as having the potential to increase the stakes for peace, she concludes that, beyond a point, it is difficult to delink trade from the political conflict. And when the political conflict escalates, it does damage progress on the economic front.

This edition of *Peace Prints* also includes two thought-provoking papers on the partition of British India, which invite the reader into conversations about alternative histories and narratives that challenge “mainstream” understandings of national identity and its relationship with the events of 1947. Saloni Kapur looks at partition through the lens of Jacques Derrida's elucidation of the concept of forgiveness as a way of facilitating reconciliation between the “partition generation” on either side and thereby improving India-Pakistan relations. Through the testimonies of Indians and Pakistanis who were victims of forced migration in 1947, Kapur offers the narrative of forgiveness as an alternative to the present-day hostility generated by the memories of partition riots. She does, however, note that reconciliation, which requires an empathetic understanding of “the other's” version of the “truth”, is difficult as long as history textbooks — and history teachers — in Pakistani and Indian schools present differing narratives of the freedom struggle and the partition. The second paper by Bani Gill presents the findings of an ethnographic study on the social and economic rights of communities that live in the district of Barmer (Rajasthan) along the international border between India and Pakistan. Titled *Border Dialogues*, the study looks at the implications of the statist project of border making on communities that were integrated through socio-cultural linkages, religion, language, trade, and commerce, but which were divided into Rajasthan (in India) and Sindh (in Pakistan) following the partition of the subcontinent. Assessing the impact of a militarized notion of state security on inclusive citizenship, people's security, and the larger political economy of the border region, Gill concludes that,

border populations face a double marginality – geographically, they are located on the edge of the nation state, and politically, their human rights and human security are frequently compromised for the sake of state security...Their livelihoods are perpetually at stake, their access to education is severely restricted, and they live their life under a framework of extreme militarization, with no recourse to accountability.

The Book Review section features a 2012 edited volume by Ashutosh Misra and Michael Clarke titled *Pakistan's Stability Paradox: Domestic, Regional, and International Concerns*. Reviewed by Ajit Kumar Jha, it examines the internal challenges that the country faces in the form of militancy, *jihadi* terror, sectarian *madrasahs*, and the predominance of the military in the country's political affairs.

Despite the varied analyses and prescriptions that the different papers bring forth in this volume of *Peace Prints*, the authors concur that the "biggest spoiler" is the deep deficit of trust that exists between the two countries. Whether this is with respect to the negative stereotypes within the trading community that seek to scuttle "trade diplomacy" or the political resistance to withdraw troops from the Siachen heights, or just public perceptions about "the other", ignorance and prejudice coupled with a deep suspicion of those across the border have undermined genuine efforts for sustainable peace and security.

In this context, the paper on *Trust-Building in International Relations* by Nicholas Wheeler addresses a crucial but overlooked dimension of relations between states, namely trust. Here, Wheeler engages with the drivers of mistrust to explore the challenges that states – particularly those that possess nuclear weapons – face in the process of building trusting relationships. In this context, he proposes the cultivation of a "security dilemma sensibility" between states which includes the ability to get into the counter fears of others, transcending security competition.

However, in order to actualize this sensibility, Wheeler points to the existence of what Mikhail Gorbachev has called the "human factor" in the context of his trusting relationship with Ronald Reagan in the 1980s or what was also seen in the relationship between Prime Ministers Atal Behari Vajpayee and Nawaz Sharif in late 1998 and early 1999. These are, as Wheeler puts it, "certain forms of interpersonal communicative dynamics (encompassing written, verbal, and face-to-face interactions)" which encourage decision-makers to enter into a "space of trust", thereby making possible new levels of cooperation. However, what followed at Kargil in the summer of 1999 is a reminder of the reality that "the 'human factor' depends crucially on the capacity of leaders to shield these initiatives from spoilers", domestic or external.

Highlighting a case study of successful trust-building between Indians and Pakistanis, the reflection piece *First Steps and Giant Leaps* by Anisha Kinra and Seema Sridhar presents a hopeful story of how youth leaders from the two countries have been able to "step into the shoes of the other" to build relationships across the divisions of conflict. Kinra and Sridhar – Indian alumni of the 2005 WISCOMP Conflict Transformation Workshop – describe their experience of reaching out to "the other", which resulted in a journey of individual and collective conflict transformation that changed them, forever.

In conclusion, at this current juncture of the India-Pakistan peace process, decision-makers need to be mindful that patience, consistency, and results are the need of the hour. At the same time,

they must constructively engage citizens on both sides of the border to support official-level peace efforts. While we laud the recent liberalization of the visa regime and the removal of barriers to bilateral trade and investment, we urge leaders of the two countries to focus on methods that can, in the words of Nicholas Wheeler, “embed trust” wherein the interpersonal chemistry between political elites is expanded to encompass the interaction between whole societies. While it would be naïve to see increased people-to-people contact as a panacea for the myriad bilateral conflicts, we do believe that multi-level and multi-sector dialogues will help Indians and Pakistanis to *listen* to the other side and to perhaps appreciate that there are no villains and victims—the pain of loss and the suffering generated by violence have no boundaries. They have touched the lives of Pakistanis and Indians, Kashmiris and non-Kashmiris alike. Such a realization could prepare the citizens of the two countries to give concessions to “the other side” and to arrive at agreements that are beneficial to all stakeholders.

It is our hope that increased face-to-face dialogue between the peoples of the two countries will build cross-cutting web-like relationships that will not only ace the test that the next stalemate presents, but will also be able to advance the “public peace process” and make it truly irreversible.

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