



India vs Pakistan: Why Can't We Just Be Friends?

Husain Haqqani

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What stops India and Pakistan from being friends? In this provocative, deeply analysed book, full of riveting revelations and anecdotes, Husain Haqqani, adviser to four Pakistani prime ministers, looks at the key pressure points in the relationship and argues that Pakistan has a pathological obsession with India, which lies at the heart of the problems between the two countries.

India vs Pakistan: Why Can't We Just Be Friends? Details

Date : Published June 8th 2016 by Juggernaut Publication

ISBN : 9788193237250

Author : Husain Haqqani

Format : Paperback 200 pages

Genre : Nonfiction, History, Cultural, India, Pakistan

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Yash Sharma says

Listen what ambassador Haqqani says

1) This book contains the following five chapters-

- * 'We can either be more than friends or become more than enemies'
- * 'Kashmir is Pakistan's jugular vein'
- * 'We should use the nuclear bomb'
- * Terrorism = Irregular warfare
- * The space for friendship is shrinking

2) Ambassador Haqqani talks about the dilemma of Jinnah who after the creation of Pakistan thought that India and Pakistan will form an alliance like USA and Canada and one day he will retire from his post of Governor-General of Pakistan and live his rest of life in Mumbai, and he also described that Gandhiji told the Congressmen to treat Pakistan as a family member who for some personal reasons separated from the joint family to live in their own separate home.

3) Author also talks about the first military coup of 1958 in Pakistan which brought the rule of Field Marshal Ayub Khan and the latter's hatred towards India and especially of Hindus which according to him is cowardly, and how from partition itself Pakistan inherited a very large army from British India and due to which most of their financial resources were spent on allowances and salaries of military personnel rather than on health and education.

4) Ambassador also presents his views on the Kashmir issue and how the Muslim League leaders failed to convince the Maharaja of J&K to join Pakistan and the four wars which India and Pakistan fought, and the creation of Bangladesh in 1971 which proved that the two-nation theory is a failure in itself, and the use of terrorism by Pakistan to bleed India to the bone.

5) Any responsible nation develops nuclear weapons as a deterrent or for global stability but Pakistan is the only nuclear state which openly says that their nuclear weapons are only to act against India and in fact the author describes his meeting with the nuclear scientist A.Q Khan (father of Pakistan nuclear bomb) and the latter's dislike towards India and his interactions with the military personnel who also want to use nuclear weapons and destroy India.

6) In short this book covers all the major events from partition to the Pathankot air base attack though in very short and minute details.

7) The language of the book is easy and the reader can finish it in a single sitting.

8) Ambassador said rather than thinking each other as enemies it's better to enhance people-to-people contact, trade, sports and cultural events which will bring the people of two countries together rather than fighting and using foul language towards each other.

I hope you like the review, thanks for reading, Jai Hind.

Mahesh Erukulla says

Hussain Haqqani is a brilliant narrator, he succinctly puts forth what ails the India-Pakistan relationship and what could be done to lessen the longstanding animosity between the neighbors.

Aditya says

I am mildly disappointed with this book. I had hoped to see a Pakistani view point that was different from what we see in Indian/US media and books. After all, there has to be some propaganda by the Indian Govt - in pragmatic statecraft there seldom are any innocents. But, this account is not very different from what appears in Indian/US media. It's more detailed and gives a historical account of how we got here; but that's pretty much it. So maybe, our media does report things well. On the whole, it's a lament by a liberal caught up in illiberal times. It's also a lament of unrealised dreams of many Pakistanis. It also ends up in a note of warning for Indians by quoting a heart touching poem: <https://koonjblog.wordpress.com/2014/...>

Ashish Noel says

Honest introspection of current state of the dubious sweet and sour relations of Pakistan and India. You can expect very little of transparency for someone who have been in political and security apparatus of country to say which needs to be known to understand why really can't we be just friends. Having said that initial quotes about Jinnah is something which I found contradicting as I have read accounts on him and his will to create Pakistan from other sources. Overall A must read account of long standing rivals in Asia.

Satya says

After having chewed over the views proffered by Husain Haqqani on the relationship between India and Pakistan, I believe that the reasons for hostility between the two states are multipronged - and resolution of the so-called Kashmir conflict alone wouldn't subside the tensions b/w the two nuclear-armed states, terrorism, for example. Husain writes that the Pakistan fears that India would undermine, disapprove and ridicule the 'two-nation theory'; weaken Pakistan to an extent that it ceases to pose any threat to Indian hegemonic designs. Further, her desire to seek parity with India only complicates the issue. India and Pakistan may have centuries of shared history but the contending nationalism, passionately taught in schools and also cultivated through jihadism and Hindutva extremism for seven decades, have eroded the commonalities b/w the two people!

Abdul says

I got a signed copy of the book from Mr. Haqqani himself and despite the obvious bias, I loved reading the book. It is a short book, composing about 150 pages but it covers all the necessary bases in India-Pakistan relations including some behind-the-scenes information from the author.

Nanda Ayush says

India vs Pakistan by Husain Haqqani.

I began reading this book on a friend's recommendation. Here in India most of books we read on India and Pakistan issue are written by Indian writers and are subject to unavoidable biases given the unpleasant history both nations share. In this context the book is even more credible as its written by Husain Haqqani a former Pakistani ambassador to US , a journalist, academician and adviser to four Pakistani Prime ministers including Benazir Bhutto.

Thus anyone interested in the story of India vs Pakistan from Pakistan's point of view or more correctly a liberal Pakistani's point of view this book is a must read.

Right from the beginning this book Clearly establishes the fact that yes we(Pakistan) have made some serious mistakes in the past, a completely opposite stand from Government of Pakistan which is always in a state of denial. But What really fascinated me were the reasons the book states for such mistakes to happen. As an Indian, lost in our own notion that how we are correct and how they are wrong we are most of the time unaware of the context and resason that lead to those mistakes to happen. This book is an eye-opener in this context.

From issue of Kashmir to Terrorism from Partition to nuclear bombs from proxy war to diplomatic relations this book touches a variety of issues concerning both nations ever since Independence.

In the end I would say the book is a Direct and honest account of an insider and a must read.

Navdeep Pundhir says

Not everyday you finish a book in one go!

Having recently read Pakistan between mosque and military by the author, I was intrigued as to what this book seemingly on a similar topic has to offer. Mr Haqqani comes out triumphant as a pragmatic sane man who puts his points honestly.

This book also serve as a guide for those uninitiated in Pakistan and its paradoxes.

Very succintly written; apt for a time when the dialogue between the two arch-rivals is slowly getting back on track. It deserves to be widely read by all thinking Indians.

Ps: the takeaway for me were the last two pages which contain a wonderful poem by Fehmida Riaz: tum bilkul hum jaise nikle

Ankit Agrawal says

Written by Husain Haqqani, an erstwhile Pakistani ambassador to the US and now an academic and think tank fellow in the same country, this is a relatively short book which nicely summarizes the important elements of relationship between India and Pakistan- how the seeds for the same were sown during Partition, the events, characters and decisions that shaped it over time, the factors that influence it today and how it might evolve in future. The book is written in an extremely easy and readable style and is probably the best primer available out there for anyone looking to educate himself or herself quickly and pointedly about the India-Pakistan relationship. While Haqqani is undoubtedly one of the most neutral and fair observers of the India-Pakistan dynamic- something that has caused his current forced self-exile to the US in view of threat to his life- the solutions he prescribes are yawn-worthy. They are rehashes of old, tired cliches and impractical

to boot.

While the author candidly accepts the inherent irrationality manifest within and the terrorism perpetrated by his country, and sincerely advises the Pakistani state and army as well as the population to reform, his advice to India and Indians to be magnanimous and large-hearted is jarring and retort-worthy. Nowhere does the author mention the unilateral granting of MFN status to Pakistan by India or the Indus Water Treaty which allows Pakistan the lion's share of the water despite India being the upper riparian state. There seems to be insufficient appreciation of the patience and fortitude shown by India in face of repeated provocation by a country that tries to punch much above its weight and is still indulged by its powerful neighbour. We have done more than enough. The onus is on Pakistan to take the steps necessary for reform or else suffer the dire consequences.

Karthik Kailash says

Husain Haqqani, a former Pakistani ambassador to the US, explains the divide since partition. He explains about the various factors for that and rues about a lost opportunity. This is a good book to understand the reasons for divide, and is a quick read.

Sneha Ann Vincent says

I have been looking for books on Indo- Pak relations lately and have happened to come across this oneit's well suited for beginners like me. But if you are looking for in-depth details , surely this is not the one for you. I just wanted to know how these issues are looked upon from the Pakistani perspective. ...whether it's the usual biased stuff or not. I would say this one is 85% unbiased and 15% biased.

Sumit says

When I started this book, I expected a lot of complaints about both side, what however surprised me was so frank admission about extent of role of military on Pakistani side. Book has been conceptualised very nicely however it lacks details.

It reads like a really long but well written essay, it doesn't have that scholarly feeling which put you off if you are only starting to read about a particular topic, so I would suggest it as a starter for people who are just embarking on a journey of India Pakistan relationship ride.

I would however still advice to read more about many specific events mentioned in the book as devil literally lies in details and in this particular relationship you can not have enough of details, there is always that counter argument of "What if we did this, your people have been doing that."

After reading the book, question that I am asking myself is next time when I see a Pakistani, can I call him brother without making him question my motives?

Kamran says

Easy to read, difficult to chew, Hard to swallow for those, in Pakistan, are being taught on 'state-narrative' and 'rote-learnin' strategy. Timely-book. The writer picked hot issues with a good-researched insight.

Kumar Anshul says

The only reason I picked this book was it being written by a Pakistani and I wanted to read a perspective from the other side of the border. It turned out that the author is not just a Pakistani, but a former Pakistani ambassador to the US and has held several high-ranking positions including as adviser to three former Pakistani prime ministers. Nevertheless, I was still expecting a biased version with distorted facts and figures (after all what can you expect from the bureaucrat of a country that has distorted the reporting of its own history!), but I was completely taken by surprise that how profoundly and maturely Mr. Haqqani has pinpointed all reasons as to why "India and Pakistan can't be friends"

In this short but whistleblower account, Haqqani clearly describes how Pakistani Mullah+Military camaraderie is not only terrorizing India but their own country and how the civilian government has been completely paraplegic to contain that. The author has tried to dive deep in the issue and has discussed the sentiments of the governments, military and civilian population of each country towards the other and correlates it with the various historical milestones that have perpetuated the current scenario. The book discusses Pakistan's faulty foreign policy and mistrust towards India, its tacit approval to irregular warfare (read terrorism), the gradual Islamization of the country and frankly compares the current attributes of both the countries that were 'born together'

To cut it short, the book is a completely 'honest and blunt' account (I might not be surprised if it is being banned in Pakistan for obvious reasons) and is a good choice to pick up if you want some hands-on, quick insights about the concerned scenario.

Click here to buy from Amazon- <http://amzn.to/2eCnj3k>

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Abhi says

Husain Haqqani, a former Pakistani Diplomat offers his views about why India and Pakistan can't just be friends. It is a critical account of Pakistani foreign policy with regards to India and is surprisingly lenient towards India.

On the Pakistani side he says that the reasons lie in a national identity crisis, insistence of the Pakistani leadership, civil or military, on equality with India despite the difference in the size of the nations, and an oversized military looking to justify its existence amid meagre revenues. While on the Indian side he offers that the trouble lies in India's inability to clearly understand Pakistan's troubles, and in turn exaggerating them at times. (We at times try to emphasize our similarities which amps up the identity crisis a notch)

The national identity crisis is best summed up by the Pakistani academic Waheed uz Zaman when he says, "If the Arabs, the Turks, and the Iranians, God forbid, give up Islam, the Arabs still remain Arabs, the Turks remain Turks, and the Iranians remain Iranians; but what do we remain if we give up Islam?" Haqqani feels that the Pakistani military leadership has capitalised on this identity crisis in order to maintain the preeminence of the Army in the state, sometimes with and sometimes without civilian government support. He traces this inordinate influence on state affairs to British policy of designating Martial Communities, a lot of which came from the territory of Pakistan. This in turn resulted in Pakistan being

allocated almost 33% of British India's armed forces with only 17% of its revenue. The Army has since then tried to maintain its claim on the resources of the nation through the creation of a national fear psychosis against Indian designs and aggression.

He concludes, therefore, that the Kashmir issue is not likely to be resolved soon as Pakistan cannot be seen to soften its stand given its identity issues and of late, India has also begun to harden its stance because of repeated ceasefire violations and state sponsored terrorist attacks from Pakistan. The nuclearisation of the neighbourhood offered a chance of detente, but that has since been squandered with Kargil in '99 and the proposed plans of the Pakistani Army to develop tactical nukes.

This book also gives an idea about how India is viewed in Pakistan. At one point Haqqani said that India has consistently applied its energies in order to achieve its goal of being a global power. Which, having witnessed the Indian polity, seemed a little over the mark. However, it does make one reassess the same views that we often hold with respect to China in India.

Haqqani ends the book with a poem by Fehmida Riaz titled "Tum Bhi Hum Jaise Nikle", pointing to the rise of Hindutva in India and how it might lead us down to a path similar to the one that Pakistan has followed so far.
