

**‘COMPETITIVE OR COOPERATIVE CONFLICT’: INTERPRETING MORTON  
DEUTSCH’S THEORY ON INDO-PAKISTAN CONFLICT DURING THE  
PANDEMIC YEAR -2020**

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**Abstract**

The long standing conflict can be served deceased if two rival nations cooperate and meet inter- personal benefits to survive well during the difficult time. Their inter-personal ‘destructive or competitive conflict’ can be ceased if they mutually look forward to resolve their conflict, even if for the ephemeral circumstances. The misperceptions and autistic hostility of either the disputant can be deteriorated if a conflict resolution be ideated. This paper applies Deutsch’s theory of Cooperation and Competition to analyze how effectively a conflict resolution be applied to the conflict between India and Pakistan to cease their conflict especially when the entire world has been persevering to call an end to the catastrophic time of Pandemic.

**Keywords:** Morton Deutsch, Theory of Cooperation and Competition, India, Pakistan, the Corona Era.

When the pandemic situation arrives, the nations should cooperate with one another, support each other, and extend essential help to each other. If the conflicts had ever taken place, then the nations should halt hatred and should work together to save human lives, more importantly should do a cumulative research to study how the catastrophic problem can be solved. This is also emphasized by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres who

has asked the nations to avoid clashes and encourage ceasefire till the world tackles this pandemic horror. “On 23 March, Guterres first proposed an immediate cessation of hostilities in all corners of the world, to allow all actors to focus on battling the virus and facilitating humanitarian aid to affected population” (International Crisis Group). The French President Emmanuel Macron also supports the UN that urges the nations to conduct ceasefire “Mr. Macron is pushing for a Security Council resolution supporting the UN Secretary General’s appeal for a worldwide ceasefire in war zones and access to civilian populations to help them combat the virus’ spread” (AFP The Hindu).

India too, had long handled the conflicts with Pakistan since the partition took place. The territorial dispute between them does not end even today. However, today is the sensitive time, when each country is losing many lives due to the corona outbreak and has also suffered an economical loss. At this time, India and Pakistan need to concentrate on their internal affairs to work how to improve the condition of their respective nations.

India has at par, focused on various techniques to recuperate from the Corona fear considering it the most indispensable issue over the rest. The central government of India had already taken the serious actions when almost a few cases were reported. It enforced the lockdown in all the states from 24 March, 2020. Nonetheless, this lockdown has made possible to save the billionth lives from the attack of this virus. Shoiab Daniyal in his article titled ‘India is enforcing the Harshest and most Extensive Covid-19 Lockdown in the World’ published in ‘The Quartz’ asserts “India is the first country to institute such a lockdown in the absence of community transmission” (1). The central government has also extended the lockdown up to 17 May, 2020 in order to procure better safety methods. Somehow, even after that, the results have turned inadequate due to the rising unpredictable interlopers, miscreants, and ignorant ones, because of whom the infected cases in India have surged in thousands.

Even then, despite the worsening condition, India has been managing remarkably well to cope up with the tedious situation. India has also humbly shown an interest to assist other nations stuck in worriment. India has agreed to export the hydroxychloroquine medicine to those countries that have demanded. Alvite Ningthoujam states in ‘The Diplomat’ “India, despite the existing domestic challenges emanating out of the pandemic, has decided to render possible help to countries like the United States, a few European, African, and Latin American countries, as well as countries in the Middle East by providing medicines and sending medical professionals and it is simultaneously strengthening overall cooperation with its extended neighbors” (1).

India has shown a courteous behaviour to extend help to other nations during the pandemic rise. What, if the South Asian countries that got separated from India could also assist India in tackling this crisis. India was the vast country at one time, that later divided

into few other nations including Pakistan. These countries surround Indian Territory. It's imperative that these nations will have to look forward to the cataclysm together with duly cooperation, despite the sour historical rifts they had gone through, otherwise, the expansion of virus may cause the vast destruction at very steady rate, despite the borders being marked.

Having realized its seriousness, most of the nations have agreed at peace, mutually to sit on a fence. However, the longest rival nation - Pakistan has been making an intense series of attacks even in the midst of the time of Pandemic. It has not eschewed its rudeness and unsympathetic disposition even at the state of crisis. India has continuously been facing the breaking of cease fire from Pakistan ever since the lockdown has been declared in the Indian states. Abhishek Bhalla in 'India Today' states "The lockdown imposed due to the Covid-19 outbreak hasn't deterred terrorists from Pakistan from making infiltration attempts. Ceasefire violations on the Line of Control continue amid a pandemic that has hit both India and Pakistan severely" (1). India has continuously been facing the outbreak of cease fire from Pakistan. It has been surrounded by repetitive sets of fire from Pakistan. 'The Al Jazeera' reports "Indian Army data reviewed by Reuters news agency shows 411 ceasefire violations by Pakistan's military in March, the highest number in a single month since at least 2018"(1). 'The Hindustan Times' reports "Indian Army chief General M.M. Naravane on Friday condemned the relentless ceasefire violations by Pakistan on the Line of Control (LoC) in Kashmir, saying the whole world is battling the coronavirus pandemic but the neighboring country has not stopped stirring trouble" (1).

Ever since Pakistan got separated, India has witnessed the several outbreaks and afflictions from Pakistan. The First Kashmir War took place in 1947 when Jammu and Kashmir were to face segmented divisions. India could get Kashmir valley, Jammu, and Ladakh whereas Pakistan got the control of Azad Kashmir and Gilgit-Baltistan. Then, Pakistan conducted an operation 'Gibraltar' in 1965 to try to capture Jammu and Kashmir. In 1971, a new war broke that culminated in the declaration of Independence of Bangladesh freed from Pakistan. The Kargil War, waged by Pakistan in 1999 ended the century on a bad note.

The 'Two nation theory' had resulted with the declaration of two independent countries- India and Pakistan. Jack Levy, the theorist on conflict theories opines "the second half-century in particular, marked a significant shift in warfare from the major powers to minor powers, from Europe to other regions, and from inter-state warfare to intra-state wars (Levy 2001). India and Pakistan became independent nations due to the uprising of the intra-state political confrontations. Since then, these nations have not ever seen stability in their 'competitive conflict'. The term 'competitive conflict' was given by Morton Deutsch, who was a theorist and who devised the conflict resolution theories.

Pakistan and India have got involved in the series of wars ever since they have been declared the independent nations. After they turned independent, their dispute over territory became a cause of tension. This cause of worry does not terminate even today in the midst of the catastrophe. The Times Now Digital asserts “The leaders in the Pakistan Assembly emphasized that war is the only option available in order to liberate the people of Kashmir and to complete the unfinished plan of the subcontinent's partition”. This does not sort out the issue, even if Kashmir is liberated, after that, Pakistan will seek the liberation of other states on the absurd pretext that Islam is unsafe in India. It may be hailed as an ability to “have an extended Greed”.

Morton Deutsch proposed a conflict resolution theory after the Second World War that states that two disputants should think for the cooperation in which they can at least try to resolve their conflict to an extent. He described if the states do not propose a solution, they take a destructive turn or a ‘competitive conflict’. He stated “in a competitive situation, you’re out to do better than the other. You’re out there, if necessary, to harm the other in order to win. You’re not interested in giving the other honest, accurate information. You want to mislead the other. You see the differences in opposition between yourself and the other, more than the common ground between yourself and the other. These characteristics, if they occur during a conflict, make that conflict take a destructive course” (Columbia University Manual).

When we look at the conflict between Pakistan and India, Pakistan still continues breaking the ceasefire. Abhinav Pandya writes in ‘The Haaretz’ “Pakistan-backed militants are making sustained attempts to infiltrate into India via the international border in the Jammu region, the Punjab border, and even the long coastline of Gujarat. Recently, there have been several reported cases of Pakistani army smuggling weapons over those borders by drones” (1). In that circumstance, then, how can their conflict be able to turn into a constructive design? How can they look towards their goal inter-dependence at the Pandemic crisis?

Pakistan has overlooked the request as sought by the UN during the pandemic crisis. It does not halt the attacks and even distract the Indian government from concentrating upon the actual grave issue. It has shown an ‘autistic hostility’ (the term proposed by Deutsch) or a hostile behaviour with the rival nation, by not realizing that this may affect its economy too. The trade may get affected. Pakistan had opened the Kartarpur Corridor last year for the Indian pilgrims, through which it was able to secure and consolidate its economy. But, during the Pandemic rise, this trade has declined. Joy Mitra conveys “Pakistan has delivered a “message of peace” by opening the Kartarpur Corridor for Sikh pilgrims from India, Foreign Minister Shah Mahmood Qureshi said Wednesday as he underlined the importance of conflict resolution for peace and stability in South Asia” (The Diplomat 1). It is refutable, because if the terrorists flung in to destroy our territory, how will the opening of Kartarpur

Corridor be helpful to the goal inter –dependence? How will Pakistan resume trade with the Indian territories?

The professors at Teacher's College connote Morton who said "Violence and war are potentials of humans, but they are not inevitabilities" (Global Campaign for Peace Education). They also add his viewpoints "Constructive resolution is also more likely when the parties can reframe their understanding of their goals and conflict, coming to see their respective goals as positively interdependent and the conflict as a joint problem" (Columbia University Reference Manual). If the outbreak of attacks does not halt, then it affects the economy of both the nations where in the armaments will be severely exploited, the military will get overburdened, and civilians will also suffer due to fear and loss, and above all, the trade will be obstructed; at both sides. Eric Fliegau and Alyssa Ayres have counted the facts "In April 12 World Bank report on South Asia's economies revised its regional GDP growth forecast for 2020 from 6.3 percent to between 1.8 and 2.8 percent" (Council on Foreign Relations). So, the rivals should surmount their 'competitive conflicts' and should focus on such a 'cooperation' that brings a tie up between them so that they can conduct trade mutually and assist each other by sharing resources. But, this has not happened in the Indo – Pakistan conflict till. So, this remains, ever a hypothesis.

Morton Deutsch emphasized "We're all human beings living in this unique neighborhood, our planet, in this universe. We share a common ancestry, a common environment and many common problems." (Columbia University Reference Manual). He emphasized that a conflict should be brought to a mutual cooperation and resolution if they bear common problems, otherwise, they get equally affected by the loss. Deutsch added "A conflict is destructive if its participants feel dissatisfied with their outcomes. And it is constructive if they feel they have gained as a result of conflict. To achieve a constructive outcome the participants must emphasize common interests and show honesty, trust, and openness" (Michael Bilig Academia.edu).

Therefore, Morton emphasized upon a condition in which the two rival nations who have long engaged in the 'competitive conflicts' can resolve their conflict with mutual cooperation and an understanding specially when, when the disastrous situation occurs and kills the people across the borders, and brings a dearth of resources to each. At least, these nations should look for mutual trade to be continued for better prospects and to consolidate their own capita. And above all, it also serves the better livelihood and good conduct of an employment and the mankind survives.

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